Hafa Adai!

Late Blanco's sis-in-law will file candidacy today for special polls. PAGE 3
Propst accuses e-gaming venue owners of lying, insincerity. PAGE 6

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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IF LEGISLATURE APPROVES INTERNET GAMING THIS YEAR,

CCC's Yeom projects $28.14M gross i-gaming revenue in '22

» Yeom attributes growth to COVID-19 complications, user demand for digital experience

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

If the Legislature passes the internet gaming bill this year, the CNMI can generate as much as $28.14 million in gross gaming revenue for calendar 2022 alone, according to Commonwealth Casino Commission executive director Andrew Yeom, citing his study and market research on the subject.

Yeom

Based on similar projections for succeeding calendar years 2023, 2024, and 2025, the CNMI can collect $112.56 million, $252.63 million, and $449.4 million, respectively, he said.

See YEOM on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

CAPITOL HILL ACCIDENT
These citizen-contributed photos show a dump truck that overturned on the road going down Capitol Hill yesterday, temporarily creating a traffic since one lane of the road had to be closed. Other photo shows the truck's driver being loaded on a gurney by a responding ambulance of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

Afghanistan's arc from 9/11 to today: Once hopeful, now sad

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—It was Nov. 13 , 2001. The sun had just begun to rise over the Hindu Kush Mountains when the Taliban disappeared from Kabul, the battered capital of Afghanistan.

The bodies of foreign Arabs who had stayed behind were mutilated and bloodied. They had been found and killed by advancing Afghans of another faction who were brought to the city by a blistering U.S.-led campaign that drove the

See AFGHANISTAN on Page 4

CNMI's COVID total now at 243

» Guam posts 146th and 147th COVID-related death

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

One arriving traveler was confirmed positive for COVID-19 in the CNMI yesterday, bringing the islands' total number of cases to 243.

See COVID on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 6:10pm, Sept. 1, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated:	78.5%
Days since last community transmission	162

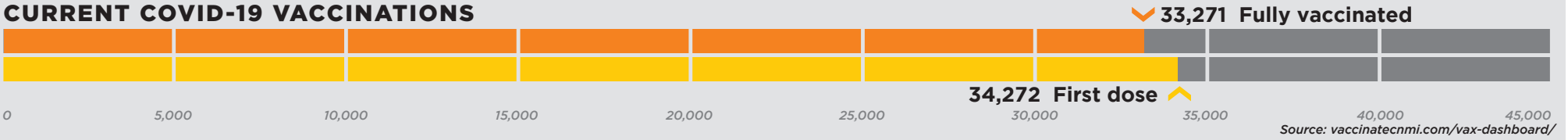
Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	29,475
Fully Vaccinated:	28,264
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,797
Fully Vaccinated:	4,249
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	758

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	10,559	181	10,740
Recovered	8,850	145	8,995
Active	1,414	181	1,595
Deaths	147	3	150

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	242	1	243
Traced via Travel Screening	205	1	206
Traced via Community Screening	37	0	37
Deaths	2	0	2

Source: Joint Information Center – Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

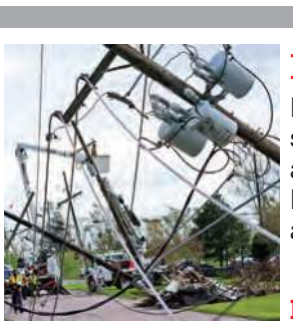


Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

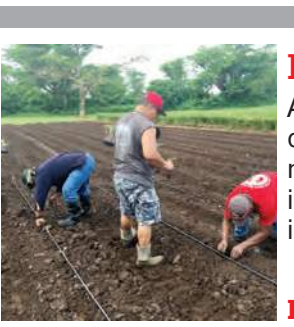
BUSINESS
The Social Security board says its trust funds are projected to become depleted in 2034.

PAGE 11



NATION
Hundreds of thousands swelter in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, with no electricity and no tap water.

PAGE 12



ENVIRONMENT
A 2021 report has disclosed that the number of hot days in the Marianas has increased.

PAGE 14

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Local

PSS online portals offer opportunities for growth

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Instructional Technology and Distance Education department of the Public School System took center stage yesterday at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce general meeting, during which the CNMI's business leaders learned that the department's programs are readying global citizens from the Marianas that will meet the 21st century needs of the CNMI.

Speaking at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom, Distance Education manager Lorraine Catienza emphasized that the programs lead to better capabilities of both students and educators in the 21st century classroom, providing technology opportunities in the education process of middle school and high school students and supporting the professional growth of educators through online portals.

"…Our 21st century classroom initiative includes our 'Student Portal' that offers online high school courses and now also into middle schools for both public and private schools. We also have the 'Professional Portal' where we offer certification courses to our personnel so they can grow professionally, maintain different positions, grow and be ready for the next level of certification," she said. They also have a "Tech Training Program" and "Aspiring Leader's Program."

The Instructional Technology and Distance Education department used to be under the program of Student Support Services but recently became its own department under the Office of the Commissioner and is branching out even more. "Our vision and mission is to provide access to quality online educational experiences to support digital learners across the CNMI," she added.

The "Student Portal" provides students in the CNMI a unique opportunity to take extracurricular and elective high school courses. Middle school students are free to start career exploration and participate in intervention programs using technology. This also helps students become comfortable using technology and taking online classes.

The "Professional Portal" provides a learning opportunity for teachers, counselors, administrators to complete certification courses and explore online course offerings that will enhance instructional skills and professional growth.

According to IT&DE director Dr. Bobby A Cruz, majority of the CNMI population live below poverty line, which means many of the children from disenfranchised families do not have access to technology. "…The reason why we work hard like we do is to make sure that that they have the same opportunities as everyone else. So through technology, we are leveling the playing field, giving children access to things that they would otherwise not have access to so they can go beyond that parameters…participate globally, and expand their horizon," he said. "… This is not to say that traditional learning doesn't work but technology adds value and helps children prepare adequately for the future."

He said the number of participants in both Student and Professional portals are increasing. "We have been running the Student Portal since 2012 and we started with a very small number of online courses. …It has grown and this past summer we saw our largest enrolment yet. Elementary school and middle school students took technology enrichment courses and we have had high school students taking core courses they need to graduate early," Catienza said.

"…We do have a really good passing rate for students. We started with 74% passing rate in 2020 but now it has grown to 88%. …Based on the evaluation we collected last summer…82% of students are very satisfied with the course design and teaching and we have an average of about 1,800 students in our online courses," she added.

'Aggression Replacement Training' this month

The Division of Youth Services will offer its Aggression Replacement Training sessions at the Kagman Community Center this month, according to Jennifer Tanaka, supervisor of the Family & Youth Enhancement Program, during a KKMP radio guesting yesterday.

ART is a 10-week program for ages 13 to 21 that introduces participants to healthy ways of managing anger. Participants taking part in the program meet three times a week for 10 weeks at the Kagman Community Center. The program is one of many that is part of DYS' Family & Youth Enhancement Program.

According to Tanaka, she wanted the program be made available for those participating in the center's after-school program, and clarified that ART is available for everyone who wants to participate.

"[ART] is not only available for those who are at risk. We want to also want to teach the [children] that come in and volunteer their time to be here so that they can know what the program is about, go out there, and share with their peers and tell them that there is such a program [like ART] here at the center so they can come over and avail of it," said Tanaka.

Those interested can find and fill out application forms at http://www.dys.gov.mp/dys-forms/, or stop by the Kagman Community Center. ***(Joshua Santos)***

Late Blanco's sis-in-law will file candidacy today for special polls

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The sister-in-law of late representative Ivan Alafanso Blanco will be the CNMI Republican Party's candidate in the upcoming special election for his vacant seat in the House of Representatives Precinct 3.

Republican Party board president James Ada said they have chosen Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae as their candidate for the Oct. 16 special election.

Vaiagae

Ada said Vaiagae, a private consultant, will file her nominating petition and candidacy documents at the Commonwealth Election Commission in Susupe today, Thursday, at 3pm.

In a statement Sunday, Ada expressed the GOP's gratitude for Vaiagae's willingness to complete the mission and service left behind by her brother-in-law.

"Community is the cornerstone of our culture. It is where we foster the belief in serving one another, where we see the role we each play in building up our neighbors, and where we find compassion and empathy for the struggles of those around us," Ada said.

He said Vaiagae embodies these lessons, borne of her love and interaction with the community around her.

At the 2019 special election for Precinct 3, Vaiagae submitted her letter of intent to the Republican Party, but the party chose Marco Taisakan Peter as the GOP's candidate. Peter subsequently won in that election.

Vaiagae obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Guam. She then pursued her master's degree while working as a therapist.

She started her career as a teacher and guidance counselor at Marianas High School, then worked as a counselor/therapist at the Marianas Behavioral Health International Inc. Saipan, where she dealt with alcohol, drugs, and substance abuse, and as a counselor for the Department of Public Safety.

Former Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s budget officer Corina L. Magofna is the candidate of the NMI Democratic Party. She will file her candidacy tomorrow, Friday.

The CEC said registration is still ongoing and that the last day to register is Sept. 17. Absentee voting applications are available online.

The seven-day early voting will start on Oct. 9.

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2020 HYUNDAI KONA SPORT — SALE PRICE $21,995 | 9,680 MILES | STK: 22M010A | KBB: $22,196
2016 MAZDA MAZDA6 SPORT — SALE PRICE $14,995 | 55,153 MILES | STK:16R269 | KBB: $14,450
2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT — SALE PRICE $18,995 | 10,120 MILES | STK:8HS879 | KBB: $19,904
2018 MAZDA MAZDA6 SPORT — SALE PRICE $22,995 | 14,064 MILES | STK: 18P335 | KBB: $23,338
2016 HYUNDAI VELOSTER — SALE PRICE $16,995 | 39,217 MILES | STK: 20H068A | KBB: $16,830
2015 TOYOTA CAMRY LE — SALE PRICE $19,995 | 44,202 MILES | STK: 15P325 | KBB: $20,295
2019 HONDA CR-V LX — SALE PRICE $25,995 | 24,306 MILES | STK: 21D019B | KBB: $26,748
2015 NISSAN ALTIMA SV — SOLD — SALE PRICE $17,995 | STK: 15P337 | 8,145 MILES | KBB: $18,251
2018 KIA SPORTAGE LX — SOLD — SALE PRICE $19,995 | 16,133 MILES | STK: 20D027E | KBB: $21,271
2015 TOYOTA TACOMA SR5 4WD — SALE PRICE $30,995 | 60,757 MILES | STK:15P327 | KBB: $32,187
2018 KIA OPTIMA LX — SALE PRICE $18,995 | 10,367 MILES | STK:18HS925C | KBB: $19,930
2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 TOURING H/B — SOLD — SALE PRICE $19,995 | 21,120 MILES | STK:20D013A | KBB: $17,801
1993 MAZDA RX-7 TURBO — SALE PRICE $35,995 | 132,406 MILES | STK:93C007
2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 — SALE PRICE $18,995 | 10,324 MILES | STK:18HS904 | KBB: $19,904
2019 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL — SALE PRICE $19,995 | 20,026 MILES | STK:9H040D | KBB: $21,411
2017 TOYOTA TACOMA TRD SPORT 4WD — SOLD — SALE PRICE $39,995 | 18,786 MILES | STK: 17P332 | KBB: $36,357

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Republicans, independent ally back Vaiagae for Precinct 3

Eight Republican members of the House of Representatives and their independent ally have endorsed the candidacy of Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae, the Republican candidate for the upcoming Precinct 3 special election to fill the vacancy as a result of the untimely passing of her brother-in-law, the late Republican minority leader Ivan A. Blanco.

Vice Speaker Blas Jonathan "BJ" Attao, floor leader Ralph Yumul, minority leader Angel Demapan, Reps. Roy Ada, Joel Camacho, Joseph Lee Pan Guerrero, John Paul Sablan, and Patrick San Nicolas are the eight Republicans, while Rep. Joseph Flores is an independent aligned with the Republican members and comprise the House minority bloc.

Together, they issued the following joint statement yesterday:

"Undoubtedly, the untimely passing of minority leader Blanco left a tremendous void in our hearts and in our endeavors as a team. And as we continue to cope with his absence, we also recognize that the system of government continues in accordance to the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth. In this case, a special election has been set for Precinct 3.

"As Republicans, together with our Independent ally, we are pleased to wholeheartedly endorse Grace 'Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae to serve as the sixth Precinct 3 member of the House of Representatives. Grace is a former educator, an advocate for women and children, and a published direct service provider to our most vulnerable members of the community who are impacted by substance abuse, trauma, and behavioral health challenges.

"For nearly a decade, Grace's professional background has given her direct exposure to our community's most difficult social challenges. This distinction makes Grace the grassroots candidate who has truly felt the pulse of our community, the candidate that works at the forefront of crisis and, more importantly, the candidate with a proven record of helping our most vulnerable friends and family members recover and take that second chance at living their best lives.

"Our decision to endorse Grace rises above party lines because she stands on a record of accomplishments that embodies the qualifications we should look for in a public servant. She listens to people, counsels people, and transforms people. We are confident that she will bring all these and more to the House of Representatives if blessed with the opportunity to serve.

"We humbly and respectfully ask the great voters of Precinct 3 to cast your votes of confidence for Grace 'Pitu' Sablan Vaiagae this coming special election. We stand ready to immediately get to work with Grace on critical legislations and our growing record of community outreach projects throughout our villages." ***(PR)***

IPI allegedly defaults on payments, again

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Xerox Corp. has asked the U.S District Court for the NMI to enforce a judgment on Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC for failing to make an installment payment for the month of August to satisfy the judgment issued against it.

In a motion filed yesterday through attorney Richard Miller, Xerox asked the federal court to dissolve the 30-day automatic stay of proceedings and to enforce a judgment on IPI's failure to make payments toward the $210,773.11 amended judgment issued in Xerox's favor last month.

Back in August, the court issued an order in aid of judgment requiring IPI to make monthly installment payments of $10,000, due on the 14th of each month, starting in July 2021. The order stated that if IPI fails to make any payment in full and on time, IPI will be in default and will have until the 21st of each month to correct the default of the installment due in that month. If IPI fails to correct the default by the 21st, then the unpaid balance of the judgment amount will become immediately due and payable and if the failure to correct the default continues to the 30th of the month, Xerox may file a motion for an order to show cause.

Xerox argues that because the 30th day of August has passed as of the date of this motion, the entire balance on the amended judgment is immediately due.

"IPI made only one payment of $10,000, in July 2021, and since then has made no payment to satisfy the amended judgment. Therefore, under the order in aid of judgment, IPI is in default for failing to pay the installment payment due for the month of August. Because it is now past the 21st of that month and IPI has not cured the default, the entire balance is immediately due and payable," said Miller.

The unpaid balance of the judgment, plus post-judgment interest accruing, is $200,781.20, without accounting for legal fees and expenses incurred for enforcement of the order in aid of judgment.

Miller argues that the court should dissolve the automatic stay and rule on the matter immediately due to the risk of IPI using its remaining assets to pay off other creditors.

"Dissolution of the stay is particularly appropriate because of the numerous actions that creditors have successfully brought against IPI in the past year in this jurisdiction for nonpayment, the court is fully aware of the company's precarious financial condition and may take judicial notice of it. The risk that IPI's assets would dissipate (or be used to pay off other creditors' claims) is real and substantial," Miller said.

Man accused of beating adoptive father to plead guilty

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man who was arrested for allegedly beating his adoptive father for no reason is set to plead guilty to the charges today.

During a preliminary hearing yesterday for In Won Hwang, 21, Office of the Public Defender's Karie Comstock, who represents him, informed the court that her client would like to waive his preliminary and arraignment hearings altogether and move forward with a change of plea.

Comstock said they could not enter a guilty plea yesterday because the plea agreement was still in the process of being finalized.

Although he intends to plead guilty, Hwang maintained a plea of not guilty before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho during his hearing yesterday. Camacho, in turn, ordered Hwang to return to court today at 2:30pm for his change of plea hearing.

Hwang was remanded back to Department of Corrections custody while he awaits his next court hearing.

According to court documents, a 77-year-old man and his 69-year-old wife called the police after Hwang assaulted his adoptive father at around 4:47pm last Aug. 23.

AFGHANISTAN

From Page 1

Taliban from power.

America was still reeling from the horrific terrorist attacks of two months earlier, when planes flown by al-Qaida terrorists crashed into three iconic buildings and a Pennsylvania field, killing nearly 3,000 people. The perpetrators and their leader, Osama bin Laden, were somewhere in Afghanistan, sheltered by the Taliban. The mission: Find him. Bring him to justice.

Right then, Afghanistan—two decades of disorder behind it, two decades more just ahead—was suspended in an in-between moment. Nothing was certain, but much seemed possible. Against that backdrop, Afghans understood the mission against bin Laden to mean a chance to secure their future—a future as murky on that day as it is today.

In those post-2001 months and years, they believed in the power of "the foreigners." From hundreds of years ago right up to the jumbled chaos of recent weeks as the United States pulled out of its air base and then the capital, the word "foreigner" has meant many things in the Afghan context, from invaders to would-be colonizers. But in November 2001, it meant hope.

"I found the people relieved fresh and full on energy to start anew,» says Torek Farhadi, who joined scores of educated and trained Afghan expatriates who returned to their homeland in 2002 after the Taliban were gone. He spoke from Geneva as he watched the Taliban›s return to power last month.

The arrival of the U.S.-led coalition weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks ended a repressive, religiously radical regime that had more in common with the sixth century than the 21st.

Mullah Mohammad Omar, the reclusive one-eyed leader of the Taliban, had brought the village to the city. The strict edicts he taught at his one-room mud madrassa, or religious school, became law. Girls were denied education. Women were confined to their homes or, when in public, inside the all-encompassing burqa. Men were told to wear beards. Television was banned, as was all music but religious chants.

When the Taliban fled and the new, post 9/11 leader, Hamid Karzai, entered the sprawling presidential palace, he discovered the Taliban had left their mark. Wall-to-wall hand-painted miniature murals had been defaced.

COVID

From Page 1

According to a Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. statement, the incoming traveler to the CNMI was identified by travel screening, and confirmed positive through fifth-day testing on Aug. 31.

The individual has been quarantined and is being actively monitored, and CHCC's Communicable Disease Investigation/ Inspection team have already initiated contact tracing for those who were in most immediate contact with the individual. CHCC also reported that there is currently only one active hospitalization related to COVID-19.

In Guam, the Joint Information Center reported yesterday that Guam logged its 146th and 147th COVID-related deaths, both occurring on Aug. 28 at the Guam Memorial Hospital. The JIC also reported that Guam's total number of COVID-related deaths has been adjusted to 149.

Guam's 146th COVID-related death was an unvaccinated 84-year-old male with underlying health conditions who had tested positive for COVID-19. He was pronounced dead on arrival at GMH on Aug. 28. Guam's 147th COVID-related death was an unvaccinated 56-year-old male with underlying health conditions who tested positive for COVID-19. He also passed away at GMH on Aug. 28.

Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero expressed her condolences to the two's families, and urged the community to get vaccinated. "[Lt. Gov. Joshua Tenorio and] I offer our deepest condolences to their friends and families. Let us continue to fight against COVID-19 to prevent further pain and tragedy. We can all play a part in making this community stronger. Please get vaccinated and protect the ones you love," said Leon Guerrero.

Also in Guam, after the Department of Public Health and Social Services reviewed all death certificates from last year, it was found that two people, on Oct. 13 and Dec. 31 last year respectively, were found to have passed away due to complications related to COVID-19. Guam's total reported COVID-related deaths was adjusted to 149.

YEOM

From Page 1

Yeom did a presentation on his internet gaming market research during the CCC board's monthly meeting at the Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai last Thursday, at CCC commissioner Diego M. Songao's request.

Yeom, who has over 14 years of online gaming executive background in South Korea, was quick to point out, though, that it's only a projection, which means it could be wrong. "There is no guarantee that it will behave as projected," he said.

If all works out well with internet gaming in the CNMI, Yeom said a CNMI-based online gambling site could have the potential to attract up to 2.1 million online users annually, generating roughly $450 million in gross gaming revenue starting in 2025 and beyond.

Citing data he obtained in his research, Yeom noted that New Jersey generated from online casinos over $81 million in June 2020, resulting in the state collecting $14 million in tax revenue for that month alone. He said this happened despite the complete shutdown of land-based casinos due to the COVID-19 pandemic—just like here in the CNMI

"That is a fact, not a projection," he said.

Yeom said that in the second quarter of calendar year 2020, online casino revenues tripled from calendar year 2019, with revenues surpassing $400 million worldwide.

He said the growth in online casinos is primarily due to user demand for a digital experience, COVID-19 complications around brick and mortar casinos, and more states legalizing online gambling products.

Yeom said casino.org research indicates that of the roughly 4.2 billion people who gamble globally, 3% from the U.S. gamble online and 5% from Asia gamble online.

He said based on Statista studies on Las Vegas visitors, an estimated 40% of overall visitors are likely to gamble online.

Yeom said studies by Grand View Research predict that the U.S. online sports betting and gambling opportunity will continue to increase between $42 billion and $58 billion annually.

He said an expected 11.25% increase in Compound Annual Growth Rate will occur for i-gaming into 2025.

Yeom said the Legislature and the public can be a judge of these projections and market data to understand what internet gaming may mean for the CNMI.

He emphasized that that he and CCC are not lobbying for the passage of internet gaming bill one way or another.

Rep. Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan) has filed House Bill 22-47 that seeks to allow senatorial districts to establish and regulate internet gaming.

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Propst accuses e-gaming venues' owners of lying, insincerity

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

House Gaming Committee chair Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) blasted the companies that own e-gaming venues Club 88 and Saipan Vegas Resort last Tuesday, accusing them of lying and making all Saipan representatives seem like horrible lawmakers.

Speaking during a House of Representatives session, Propst said the owner of Club 88 and Saipan Vegas Resort are also accusing Saipan lawmakers of recklessly trying to hurt their 70 employees.

Propst

At least three Club 88 and Saipan Vegas Resort employees, wearing shirt with the printed message "Save our Jobs" were in the House's gallery when Propst made his remarks.

At the center of this contention is the newly enacted Saipan Local Law 22-6, which essentially doubles the license fees imposed on e-gaming machines. MP Holdings LLC, which operates Saipan Vegas, and Mariana Entertainment, LLC, which operates Club 88, have accused the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation of rushing the local laws passage through the Legislature, without seeking public comments. Both companies, which are sister firms, have expressed optimism lately that the law could still be amended.

During Tuesday's session, Propst said he is frustrated because the owner conveniently missed out on many important facts and lied about closing down Club 88, yet that did not happen. "It wasn't shut-

» Jackson: We remain hopeful we can reach a compromise

down! So who's the liar? We or them?" Propst said.

Bart Jackson, who is the general manager of MP Holdings LLC and Mariana Entertainment, LLC said in a statement yesterday that they had intended to close Club 88 on Aug. 27 but, after some initial positive responses from the Saipan delegation, they decided to postpone the closure "as we were hopeful that we could find a compromise solution to [SLL 22-6] and because we had recently offered a suggested amendment to the local law. Our decision to postpone the closure is in part driven by our desire to keep employing the 30 hardworking individuals at Club 88."

Propst said the thing that bothers him is how MP Holdings LLC and Mariana Entertainment, LLC have singled out House floor leader Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan) and made him out to be the enemy, because he happens to be the author of the bill and is the brother of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's chief executive officer Ray Yumul. He said for the owner of these e-gaming establishments to file an ethics complaint against Yumul "is insulting to our intelligence."

"To try to shame us into somehow bowing, that we are going to suddenly to repeal this because we are being threatened and coerced and bamboozled is not going to work for me and I'm certain it will not work for you!" Propst said.

He said the owner ignores the fact that the bill was prefiled on April 14, introduced on April 23, transmitted for action on June 18, and signed into law by Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres on Aug. 2, 2021.

In his statement yesterday, Jackson said they believe it is important as a member of the local business community to be able to be heard by the Saipan delegation on matters that impact their businesses.

"We have never intended any disrespect or insult to members of the Saipan delegation. We have only voiced what we sincerely believe are legitimate concerns regarding the impact of Saipan Local Law 22-6 on our ability to run our businesses and keep our 70 employees employed. We were not given an opportunity to discuss [SLL 22-6] with the Saipan delegation regarding the financial impacts prior to Aug. 2, 2021.

"In sum, we have proposed a possible amendment to Saipan Local Law 22-6. We want to have further dialogue with the local delegation. We remain hopeful we can reach a compromise regarding the amount of the new license fee," he added.

Propst insists that the local law's passage was a policy call and that's what they do as policy makers. He pointed out that the intent of SLL 22-6 is to include all businesses in this local law and tax them all, including IPI.

Propst said Club 88 and Saipan Vegas Resort gaming consultant Gus Noble needs to follow the law and register as a lobbyist. "Same as anyone else who is paid by that company to register as a lobbyist," he said.

Propst said Noble and the owner should also apologize to Yumul.

"If they want to negotiate they should be sincere!" he said.

Powerhouse Kaneshi sisters bag another 'Taste' cookoff title

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Kaneshi sisters—Nataline Kaneshi Borlaine and Mercilynn Kaneshi Palec—showed once more that they are a force to be reckoned with when it comes to Taste of the Marianas cookoffs after bagging their third win last weekend.

Borlaine, the head chef, was the mastermind behind the duo's winning *Escabeche* dish that left the judges wanting more. Her sister, Palec, served as her sous chef and support system throughout the competition.

When asked how she felt about bagging their third cookoff title, Borlaine said it was a shock, especially since she went up against veteran chef Samson Tan who has over 30 years of experience in his arsenal. Tan was named Borlaine's runner up, followed by third place winner Smoked Out, and finally, Andrew Songsong in fourth place.

"I was really shocked. I beat my good friend and former co-worker. I'm so shocked because I honestly expected him to beat me," she said.

Nataline Kaneshi Borlaine poses for a photo following her win during the 22nd annual Taste of the Marianas Escabeche cookoff last Friday.
KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

When asked how she did it, Borlaine said she put a lot of her heart and soul into the dish as it has always been one of her favorites and was also one of her grandmother's specialties.

"*Escabeche* is one of my favorite dishes and I taught myself how to cook it because it was something I really loved. My grandmother also made it all the time," she said.

Palec said it wasn't the pair's first rodeo. In fact, together, the sisters took home the cookoff titles at the Taste of the Marianas 2017 and 2019 but, in the end, what matters is the bonding experience they share throughout the competitions.

"This isn't [our] first time competing. We competed back in 2019 for the barbecue chicken competition and we won first place. We also competed for King of the Grill in 2017 and we won that as well. We're used to winning. We do this yearly because we really enjoy it. It's a sister-bonding experience," said Palec.

Taking first place in the *Kadun Pika* competition was team Smoked Out, followed by Pika Me to Win, and completing the top three was Samson Tan.

Meanwhile in the *bunelos* eating competition, George Cabrera finished first place after consuming over two lbs of sweet potato *bunelos.* He was followed by Ramon Rejano and completing the top three was Regino Ben.

House passes bill that authorizes DPL to issue encroachment permits

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives passed yesterday a bill that authorizes the Department of Public Lands to issue licenses and use permits and charge fees for the use of the public lands located within 150 feet of the high water mark.

High water mark refers to the highest water stand reached by the lake or river, or highest level reached by the sea at high tide.

At a House session Tuesday, representatives adopted the House Committee on Natural Resources' committee report that recommends the passage of the bill in the form of H.B. 22-31, HS1.

All 16 representatives present at the session voted "yes" to the passage of the legislation authored by Rep. Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan). The bill now goes to the Senate for action.

Before the voting, House Committee on Natural Resources chair Rep. Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan) said this bill proposes to authorize DPL to issue encroachment permits.

"We did change the title to specify that this bill will only allow to be able to issue encroachment permits, and charge fees for the use of public lands located within 150 feet of the high water mark," Babauta said.

She said the bill was a controversial legislation so she ensured that they held hearings on the bill on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota since last April. The committee also solicited comments from over 20 departments and agencies, and received comments from well over 20 community members, organizations, and public entities.

Babauta clarified that the changes that are proposed in this bill will allow DPL to charge for encroachment of existing structures only.

"This will not allow for the construction of new buildings by any new buildings or permanent structures by any businesses. This is only for public lands. And these are existing structures," she said.

Babauta said at this time, the people of the CNMI are losing out on funds that they can be charging these businesses on existing structures and that's because DPL has no authority to collect from these businesses. She said DPL's authority is only to tell them to demolish the existing structures, that when it was built it was compliant with the law.

"Because of climate change and because of our shorelines now that we're losing land, we are literally losing land because of climate change. And this is a good example of that," Babauta said.

The chairwoman said many of the CNMI's loyal and longtime businesses who had built structures at the time when the Commonwealth's shorelines were beyond the 150 feet of the high watermark are now encroaching.

She said that's the only changes that are being proposed by this bill.

"We did ensure that any of the encroachment permits that are granted will not interfere with the public's access to these beaches and to these public spaces," Babauta said.

The chairwoman pointed out that because it is important to her and to the committee that CNMI people still have access to these lands, the language is included in this substitute. Babauta thanked Guerrero for introducing this bill to finally address the issues that long-term businesses are experiencing and so that DPL can collect on these public lands.

"I am in support of this piece of legislation. I do encourage my colleagues to support this bill as well. And I'm ready to vote," the lawmaker said.

Guerrero commended the Committee on Natural Resources for its tremendous work on this bill even though it was a House substitute bill.

"The chair really did an awesome addition on the bill and I salute her and the committee members," Guerrero said.

He said he is hoping that the Senate would act on this bill.

The bill proposed that DPL may not transfer an interest, and may prohibit the erection of any permanent structure, in public lands located within 150 feet of the high water mark of a sandy beach, except that:

- DPL may authorize the construction of facilities for public purposes.
- DPL may grant a nonexclusive license or permit provided the use does not interfere with the public's access to the property.

17,500 people join three-day Taste of the Marianas

An estimated 17,500 people turned out over three days at last weekend's 22nd Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden at Garapan Fishing Base on Saipan. The annual signature event of the Marianas Visitors Authority featured 20 food and drink vendors and live entertainment under COVID-19 safety protocols, including mandatory temperature checks and masks.

"This year's Taste of the Marianas was incredible," said MVA managing priscilla M. Iakopo. "This would not have been a huge success without the support [of] our executive leaders, public health officials, government agencies, sponsors, food and drink vendors, arts council, entertainers, and most especially our community for cooperating with the safety measures. Let us continue to stay vigilant in practicing our three Ws and getting vaccinated so we can continue to get together."

This year's festival was sponsored by Bank of Guam, IT&E, Bridge Capital, AA Construction, and Dave's Electronics Center. At the opening ceremony, MVA vice chair Gloria Cavanagh acknowledged partner agencies who helped make the festival possible: Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., CNMI COVID-19 Task Force, Bureau of Environmental Health, Alcoholic Beverage and Tobacco Control, Bureau of Environmental & Coastal Quality, Department of Public Lands, Department of Lands & Natural Resources, Saipan Mayor's Office, Saipan Zoning Office, Department of Public Safety, Rota Mayor's Office, Commonwealth Utilities Corp., and Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services. ***(PR)***

GAVEL TURNOVER

Alicia Barbo, left, who is the Saipan Unity Lions Club's president for lion year 2020-2021, turns over the club's official gavel to Yolanda Villavicencio, who is the newly installed Saipan Unity Lions Club president for lion year 2021-2022, during the induction ceremony last Aug. 21, 2021, at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort. This event signifies the acceptance of the position to lead the group and accept responsibilities as the new president for the lion year. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Flores' absence at session triggers debate

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Flores

Babauta

The absence of Rep. Joseph A. Flores (Ind-Saipan) from the House of Representatives' Tuesday session, during which his bill was the only measure on the calendar for action, triggered debate among some lawmakers over the actions being taken on the bill.

At the session, House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) announced that they have only one bill on the calendar, but they will be leaving it on the calendar at the request of the author, Flores. After much tug of war among the lawmakers, Villagomez put his foot down and stood firm on his ruling to leave the bill on calendar.

House Bill 22-3 seeks to amend the Commonwealth Code by requiring the motor vehicle liability insurance to expire at the same time as the vehicle registration expiration.

The debate got started after House JGO Committee chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta took issue with the decision to not act on the bill during the session, saying she specifically came to the session to vote for this bill at the request of the author. "The fact that the author has prioritized a softball game over his duties here at the Legislature is not my concern," Babauta said.

She said she is ready to vote on the bill and that she would like to hear from House floor leader Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan) why it has been deferred. "And really why should we delay the inevitable of this bill?" Babauta said.

She also took issue with Flores earlier requesting for the bill to be yanked out of the JGO Committee and criticized Yumul for not asking her or letting her know that the bill will be yanked out of the committee.

"So we're attacking the author of the bill and we're questioning the authority of the floor leader. Wow!" Sablan said.

Earlier, he stated that it is a practice in the House that the author be given respect to be present to vote on his/her bill.

Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan) said they respect the Speaker's and the floor leader's call to table the bill until the next session but Flores' reasoning for pulling the bill out of the JGO Committee in the first place was because it was urgent, yet despite the bill now on calendar, his being not there to vote only underscores the bill's lack of urgency.

Besides Flores, Reps. Jonathan Blas Jonathan T. Attao and Joel C. Camacho, were also absent at the session. Villagomez said they're excused.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM
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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 • Telephone: (670) 664-2374 • Facsimile: (670) 664-2408

Addendum 1

September 2, 2021

Extension of Bid Submission for ITB21-GOV-132 Supply and Installation of Typhoon Shutters and Doors at the Tinian Youth Center and Tinian Aging Center

1. The August 27, 2021 submission date has been extended to September 20, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.
2. There will be a virtual pre-bid meeting for this project on September 9, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.
3. Questions are due on or before September 13, 2021 (Leona Deleon Guerrero at ldlguerrero@omb.gov.mp).
4. All other requirements of the Invitation for Bid and the project package shall remain as stated.

Virginia C. Villagomez
Governor's Authorized Representative

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NOTICE OF BID CANCELLATION

ITB21-GOV-143 Supply and Installation of Typhoon Shutters and Doors at the Saipan Office on Aging

The Commonwealth is canceling the invitation for bid ITB21-GOV-143 Supply and Installation of Typhoon Shutters and Doors at the Saipan Office on Aging. The Commonwealth is considering re-issuing a new bid for this project. All prospective bidders will be notified once the new bid is determined. The Commonwealth appreciates the time and effort it took in preparing your bid response and apologizes for any inconveniences this may have caused. If you have any questions, please contact Leona Deleon Guerrero at ldlguerrero@omb.gov.mp.

Virginia C. Villagomez
Governor's Authorized Representative

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB21-CHCC/CGC-SATR-001
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"PROCUREMENT OF 7-SEATS PASSENGER VAN"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB21-CHCC/CGC-CCP-001
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"LEASE OF VEHICLES"

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAESP-21-037

A&E SERVICES FOR TINIAN WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP) & ROTA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP) PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING REPORT & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER) and Environmental Impact Assessment for Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTP) on Tinian and Rota. The services shall include preparation of the PER as per USDA RUS Bulletin 1780-2, an Environmental Assessment for submittal to the CNMI Coastal Resources Management (CRM) as a Major siting Permit Application.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior.

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-RAESP-21-037, A&E Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) – Preliminary Engineering Report & Environmental Impact Assessment", to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than 10:00 a.m., (ChST) on September 8, 2021. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAESP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on August 16, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Larry Manacop, CUC Acting Chief Engineer at email larry.manacop@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

After 20 years, US leaves Afghanistan in defeat

The United States officially left Afghanistan late Monday, pulling out the last of its troops, but leaving behind thousands of Afghans who served our mission there and an unknown number of Americans who either couldn't get to the Kabul airport for evacuation or made the deliberate decision to stay.

The departure ended the longest military mission in U.S. history, one that cost at least $2 trillion and around 2,500 American service members' lives. The last 13 of those casualties came last week during the chaotic exit when terrorists detonated bombs outside the airport.

While a majority of Americans had wearied of the war in Afghanistan after 20 years with no clear picture of what victory would look like, watching the most potent military in the world flee with its tail between its legs was gut wrenching.

President Joe Biden gets credit for finally bringing the conflict to an end and our remaining troops home; he also owns the blame for the disastrous way in which the evacuation was executed and the responsibility for getting out those we left behind.

America invaded Afghanistan after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks because the country was providing sanctuary to those who carried out the assaults.

The mission was clearly defined in the beginning by President George W. Bush: To eliminate Afghanistan as an epicenter of Islamic terrorism, and to bring to justice Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaida for plotting and carrying out the 9/11 attacks.

Bin Laden was finally tracked down and killed in 2011, 10 years after the attacks on the United States. Al-Qaida has been largely neutralized, though other terrorist groups, most notably the Islamic State, have taken root in Afghanistan.

But over two decades, the U.S. and its allies lacked a determined strategy for carrying out the core objective of Operation Enduring Freedom to establish a stable government in Afghanistan able to fend off the extremism and keep its people secure.

Stability in Afghanistan always depended on the size of the allied force in the country. Strength of the Taliban opposition ebbed and flowed, but never went away.

There were victories to celebrate. Hamid Karzai became Afghanistan's first democratically elected president in 2004.

See AFTER on next page

The Afghanistan war wasn't a cynical misadventure

By HAL BRANDS
Bloomberg Opinion

Hal Brands is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist, the Henry Kissinger Distinguished Professor at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, and a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. Most recently, he is the co-author of* The Lessons of Tragedy: Statecraft and World Order.

Lost wars are supposed to provoke soul-searching. In America, they usually bring historical revisionism instead. When once-good wars go bad, Americans tend to conclude that there was never anything redeeming about them in the first place.

This impulse is already coloring the debate over Afghanistan. It won't help the U.S. recover or learn from defeat.

Much of the flourishing "who lost Afghanistan?" debate features self-exculpation. Trump-era officials such as former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blame President Joe Biden's withdrawal for the collapse, eliding their own role in negotiating a weak peace deal with the Taliban. Biden has blamed the Afghan military for folding, not mentioning that a rapid U.S. pullout weakened and demoralized that force.

Yet arguments about Afghanistan also touch on a deeper American tradition. When the U.S. loses a war—or wins one only to lose the subsequent peace—the result is often a consensus that the war in question was corrupt and hopeless from the start.

In 1917, Woodrow Wilson led America into World War I in hopes of building a just, lasting peace. After he and his successors failed to do so, revisionist scholars and even public officials rewrote history, arguing that a dark coalition of financiers and arms manufacturers had duped America into joining a pointless struggle between self-interested European empires. By 1937, 70% of Americans thought that entering the conflict had been a mistake.

After the Vietnam War turned into a costly quagmire, the conventional wisdom became that there never really had been a communist threat to Southeast Asia. When America's conflict in Iraq went awry, blame fell on a supposed cabal of neoconservatives intent on spreading democracy throughout the Middle East at the point of a gun.

Similar themes are prevalent today. Since 2019, the Washington Post has run articles arguing that the war in Afghanistan was a quixotic, failing exercise in nation-building, sustained only by a bipartisan pattern of lies. Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren has dusted off the post-World War I merchants-of-death thesis, alleging that supporters of the Afghan war were "bought and paid for by the defense industry." Other critics contend that a corrupt foreign policy elite—"the blob"—shamelessly perpetuated a bloody failure.

There is indeed much to critique in how America has entered, fought and exited nearly all of its conflicts. Yet most of these arguments don't stand up to serious scrutiny.

The U.S. entered World War I not to serve the interests of arms manufacturers and bankers, but because it was outraged at German attacks on neutral shipping and rightly feared German dominance of Europe. There was a serious communist threat to much of Southeast Asia in the early 1960s, even if the consequences of U.S. intervention were catastrophic. The Iraq War was a tragic but understandable response to post-9/11 fears of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction—threats that came together, or so the intelligence said, in Saddam Hussein's regime.

In the same vein, the Afghanistan war was not simply two decades of falsehood and folly. The U.S. fought to destroy a terrorist organization that had inflicted devastating injury, and then to prevent the regime that had sheltered that organization from returning to power. It sought to build a functioning Afghan state because there was no other way to sustainably accomplish these other goals.

There was no conspiracy of lies about American prospects in Afghanistan. Officials from both parties acknowledged that the war was not going well, even as they declined, until recently, to withdraw because they feared the consequences that are unfolding today.

This isn't just historical nitpicking. Disillusion after World War I led to American paralysis in the prelude to World War II. The notion, as President Barack Obama put it, that Iraq was a "dumb war" cooked up by ideologues contributed to a premature withdrawal that squandered what stability had been achieved.

Being honest about one's errors is essential to good strategy. But when Americans conclude that the last war was an exercise in dishonesty or futility, that belief typically deforms their next set of strategic decisions.

It also makes it harder to learn from failure. Twenty years of combat can yield a lot of sad wisdom—about the difficulty of remaking foreign societies, of course, but also about America's ability, amply demonstrated in recent years, to keep severe pressure on terrorist organizations through relatively modest expenditures of lives and treasure.

There is a good debate to be had about the benefits of long-

See AFGHANISTAN on next page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Want to avoid another chaotic school year with COVID fears, masks? Try home-schooling

By CYNTHIA M. ALLEN
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Cynthia M. Allen is a columnist for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. *Readers may send her email at cmallen@star-telegram.com.*
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Driving home Wednesday after our first day of co-op schooling, I felt overwhelmingly grateful.

Many of my friends have spent the last week consumed by the battle over school mask mandates.

They are steeling themselves for the inevitable return to virtual school, the tumult it will bring to their households and the learning loss their kids will endure as a result.

Some friends already have disappointed kids quarantined at home, not due to sickness but to "exposure" to COVID-19.

My family will avoid the quarantines, the consternation and the chaos baked into yet another school year, because our kids will be learning at home—not by default but by design.

And we are far from alone in this decision.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 11.1% of families reported home-schooling their kids at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. (It's worth noting that homeschooling was distinguished from virtual schooling in the household survey, so as not to conflate the two very different models.)

It's an increase of 5.6 percentage points and means twice as many U.S. households home-schooled compared to the prior year.

The increase was even greater among minority households, where the proportion of homeschooling families increased by five times for Black families. The rate rose from 3.3% in the spring of 2020 to 16.1% in the fall.

In Texas, the ranks of all home-schooled children have similarly exploded from 4.5% to 12.3% over the same period.

The Texas Homeschool Coalition says that means that well over 750,000 students in Texas were home-schooled during the last school year.

The advocacy group doesn't yet have a concrete estimate of how many Texas students will be home-schooled during the school year just begun, but it reports that many families are seeking its guidance and resources.

Given the school year's already rocky start, it won't be surprising if the number grows.

While it's undeniable that much of the dramatic increase in home education is the direct result of the pandemic, the reasons why parents are choosing to home-school vary greatly.

A sizable group wants to avoid exposure to COVID-19. But a second, probably similarly-sized group, is choosing to home-school to protect kids from virus-mitigation efforts they find draconian, psychologically damaging and rooted in politics instead of science.

Bethany Mandel, a writer and home-school mom of five I spoke with, says there is a third category of pandemic home-schoolers—those who were already "homeschool-curious," tried it and realized how much it dramatically improved family life.

Mandel says she's spoken with a surprising number of home-school families who fall into this category and it's these students for whom home-school is likely to continue, regardless of the state of the pandemic.

For many (if not all) of the families I've spoken with, home-schooling was always the plan, although the impetus behind the decision is seldom identical. Some choose to home-school for cultural or religious reasons. Others find the scheduling, convenience and pace of life is vastly improved by in-home education. For others still, home-schooling just "feels right."

Still, educating one's own children isn't always easy. It requires discipline and sacrifice and a certain willingness to be counter-cultural.

But every home-school family I've talked to says the flexibility and dynamism it provides makes the challenges worth the effort.

And every family I've talked with says the chaos of pandemic schooling, not to mention the ongoing cultural battles (from gender ideology to critical race theory) for which our schools have become flash points, only justify the decision to home educate.

We simply don't know if home-schooling will decline when the pandemic eventually subsides, but it's clear that parents everywhere are recognizing that home-schooling isn't only a viable option, it's a really good one.

And there's no better time to give it a try.

Another victim of our freedom fetish

By JOHN M. CRISP
Tribune News Service

John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service*, lives in Georgetown, Texas, and can be reached at jcrispcolumns@gmail.com.*

You don't have to be a scientist to muster convincing arguments in favor of commonsense measures for combating COVID-19. COVID spreads through the air. Why wouldn't a face covering of nearly any kind reduce the amount of virus that an infected person exhales, and thus diminish the chances of spreading the disease to others?

But scientists support this commonsense understanding of COVID transmission as well. One model from the University of Washington says that 98,000 people will die of the virus by Dec. 1. In an Associated Press story last week, Dr. Ali Mokdad, a professor of health metrics sciences at the university, said: "We can save 50,000 lives simply by wearing masks. That's how important behaviors are."

What drives mask-resistant Americans and anti-vaxxers to reject measures that both science and common sense indicate will save lives and help us return to normal?

One objector told me that he doesn't "like" masks. Others worry that vaccinations cause sterility. Some believe that inoculation will surreptitiously implant a chip, even as they tolerate the chips that are their constant companions in the cellphones that they carry with them everywhere.

But whatever their objections, at some point mask-resisters and anti-vaxxers nearly always resort to an essential theme: freedom.

Freedom is the heart of Americanism. We esteem it so highly that we're in constant danger of fetishizing it.

A fetish is a fixation that elevates to the level of obsession a part above all other elements of a whole. In sexual terms, a fetish links gratification to an unusual degree to a particular object or part of the anatomy. A "freedom fetish" privileges our right to do as we please above all else. The most blunt, petulant version of this fetish is embodied in an often-heard phrase: "Nobody is going to tell me what to do."

The obsession with freedom can become so powerful that it blinds us to other equally important principles essential to society and our well-being: a sense of mutual responsibility, an obligation to the law, the need to relinquish some liberties in order to enjoy others, the legitimacy of science, our communal health, our individual health.

I was thinking about this when I came across Caleb Wallace, age 30. He seemed like a good man. The mayor of his hometown, San Angelo, Texas, says that during the devastating snowstorm last February, Wallace volunteered to drive out to assist residents who were trapped in their homes.

Wallace was a family man. He appeared to be devoted to his wife, Jessica, and his three beautiful young daughters. A fourth daughter is due on Sept. 27.

Wallace was also a devoted anti-masker. In the face of scientific consensus, as well as common sense, he publicly objected to all mask mandates and any restraint on his right to go maskless at all times. He demanded that San Angelo's public schools rescind any requirements to wear a mask.

A good deal of Wallace's anti-mask rhetoric involved freedom. He was a founder of San Angelo Freedom Defenders. Last fall he helped organize a "Freedom Rally" intended to put an end to "COVID-19 tyranny." In November Wallace addressed San Angelo city officials in a public meeting: "I care more about freedom than I care about your personal health."

By Aug. 25, Wallace had been in an ICU for three weeks from a COVID infection. Jessica posted on Facebook: "He's not doing good. It's not looking in our favor, his lungs are stiff due to the fibrosis. They called and said they've run out of options for him." On Aug. 28, Wallace died.

No decent person will find satisfaction in the karmic irony of Caleb Wallace's death. He made some mistakes, but he was also a victim, and not just of COVID. Our obsession with freedom can be so powerful that we're easily beguiled by politicians who assert that our freedoms are under constant threat of being taken away. Even if they're not.

They use this fear for their political advantage. In fact, these days the opposite of freedom isn't tyranny. It's fear.

AFTER

From Page 8

Women, who were effectively prisoners in their homes during Taliban rule, were free to go to schools, join the workforce, own businesses and more fully participate in society.

Most important, since 9/11 there has not been a significant terrorist attack launched on America from Afghanistan.

Now, the allies are gone and the Taliban is back in control. And they are suddenly armed with billions of dollars of sophisticated military equipment, including aircraft, left behind in Biden's hasty exit, making them a much greater danger than they were before.

The U.S. was not likely to succeed in our mission in Afghanistan by staying longer. But it could have done a better job of leaving.

Aside from the loss of American lives, the mismanaged evacuation also cost the U.S. credibility with its mission allies, many of whom were forced to scramble to get their own personnel out of the country under extremely dangerous conditions. How will they respond the next time America needs their help?

It is difficult to view the 20 years and great investment in Afghanistan as anything but a failure.

The biggest challenge ahead, without a military presence in the country, is assuring Afghanistan doesn't again become a threat to the security of America and the rest of the free world.

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AFGHANISTAN

From Page 8

duration but relatively light-footprint interventions of the sort Washington had in Afghanistan after 2014. But if the debate begins with the premise that the war was simply a cynical misadventure, the blunt conclusion to be drawn is less useful: Don't do that again.

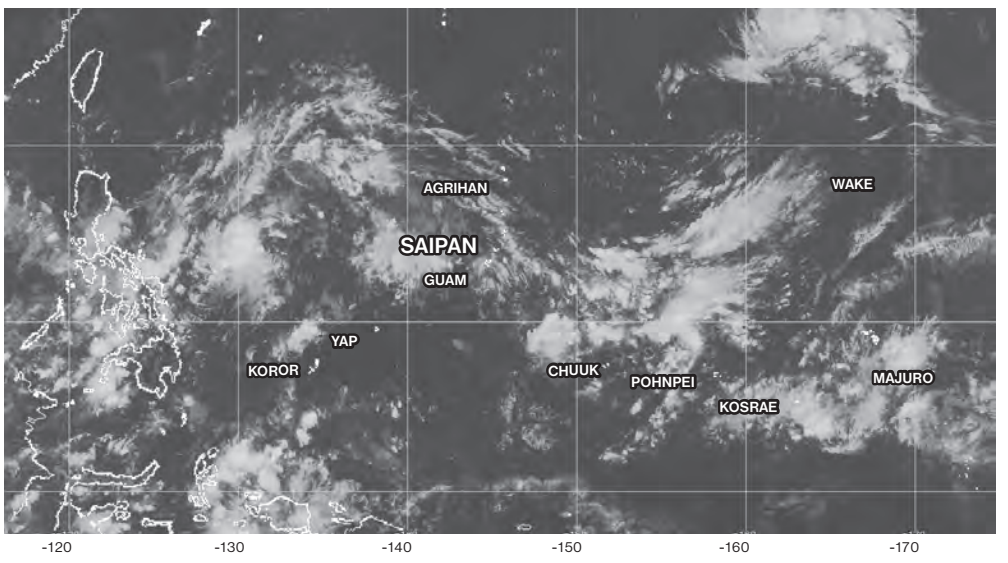
Reasonable analysts can disagree about whether America should have withdrawn from Afghanistan. The price of the mission was undoubtedly far too high. What will make it even more costly is if the last casualty of a lost war turns out to be America's ability to learn anything useful from its experience.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly sunny with isolated showers and thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 5 to 10 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with showers likely and a chance of thunderstorms.
87º 78º	86º 76º	86º 76º	86º 76º	86º 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:02 AM, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Skies are mostly cloudy across the Marianas this morning, with mainly isolated showers and thunderstorms, all associated with a weak 500 mb circulation west of the islands and a weak surface trough moving slowly west in gentle trade winds. Combined seas remain at 3 to 4 feet at the Ipan buoy.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Strong thunderstorms	77 / 83 °F
Palau	Partly sunny	81 / 88 °F
Yap	Strong thunderstorms	81 / 87 °F
Chuuk	Partly cloudy	80 / 88 °F
Pohnpei	Mostly cloudy	74 / 86 °F
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	76 / 85 °F
Majuro	Heavy rain	80 / 85 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:04 AM	6:28 PM
Friday	6:04 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:04 AM	6:27 PM
Sunday	6:04 AM	6:26 PM
Monday	6:04 AM	6:25 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	1:25 AM	2:53 PM	-
Friday	2:17 AM	3:44 PM	-
Saturday	3:12 AM	4:33 PM	-
Sunday	4:08 AM	5:20 PM	-
Monday	5:05 AM	6:04 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Morning clouds	46 / 56 °F
Beijing	Partly cloudy	73 / 87 °F
Hong Kong	Heavy rain	80 / 86 °F
Honolulu	Partly cloudy	74 / 82 °F
London	Morning clouds	60 / 74 °F
Los Angeles	Sunny	62 / 85 °F
Manila	Mostly cloudy	80 / 87 °F
Melbourne	Afternoon clouds	47 / 60 °F
Miami	Partly sunny	79 / 87 °F
New York	Partly cloudy	74 / 87 °F
Osaka	Partly sunny	78 / 94 °F
Paris	Partly sunny	61 / 76 °F
Pusan	Partly cloudy	80 / 91 °F
Rome	Partly cloudy	66 / 87 °F
Salem	Sunny	67 / 97 °F
San Francisco	Morning clouds	57 / 69 °F
Seoul	Mostly cloudy	78 / 91 °F
Tokyo	Thunderstorms	77 / 86 °F
Washington, DC	Partly sunny	72 / 89 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
2:26 AM	High Tide	1.58
10:16 AM	Low Tide	0.22
6:00 PM	High Tide	1.72
11:10 PM	Low Tide	1.30

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:15am	9:55am	2, 4, 5, 7
UA117	6:30am	7:10am	1, 3, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:30am	8:50pm	2, 5 via Guam
UA117/183	6:30am	9:10pm	3, 6, 7 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	6:55pm	8:50pm	2, 5
UA183	7:15pm	9:10pm	3, 6, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	4:50am	5:50am	1, 3, 6
UA174	7:30am	8:11am	2, 4, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	9:50pm	5:50am+1	2, 5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	8:11am+1	3, 6, 7 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	9:50pm	4:00am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:25pm	4:40am+1	3, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

‘Combined SS trust funds to be depleted a year sooner’

The Social Security board of trustees released yesterday its annual report on the long-term financial status of the Social Security Trust Funds. The combined asset reserves of the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance trust funds are projected to become depleted in 2034, one year earlier than projected last year, with 78% of benefits payable at that time.

The Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund—or OASI Trust Fund—is projected to become depleted in 2033, one year sooner than last year’s estimate, with 76% of benefits payable at that time. The Disability Insurance Trust Fund—or DI Trust Fund—is estimated to become depleted in 2057, eight years earlier than last year’s estimate, with 91% of benefits still payable.

In the 2021 Annual Report to Congress, the trustees announced:

■ The asset reserves of the combined OASI and DI trust funds increased by $11 billion in 2020 to a total of $2.908 trillion.

■ The total annual cost of the program is projected to exceed total annual income, for the first time since 1982, in 2021 and remain higher throughout the 75-year projection period. As a result, asset reserves are expected to decline during 2021. Social Security’s cost has exceeded its non-interest income since 2010.

■ The year when the combined trust fund reserves are projected to become depleted, if Congress does not act before then, is 2034—one year earlier than last year’s projection. At that time, there would be sufficient income coming in to pay 78% of scheduled benefits.

The Social Security board’s annual report states that the combined asset reserves of the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance trust funds are projected to become depleted in 2034, one year earlier than projected last year. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

“The trustees’ projections in this year’s report include the best estimates of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Social Security program,” said Kilolo Kijakazi, acting commissioner of Social Security. “The pandemic and its economic impact have had an effect on Social Security’s trust funds, and the future course of the pandemic is still uncertain. Yet, Social Security will continue to play a critical role in the lives of 65 million beneficiaries and 176 million workers and their families during 2021.”

Other highlights of the trustees’ report include:

■ Total income, including interest, to the combined OASI and DI trust funds amounted to $1.118 trillion in 2020. ($1.001 trillion from net payroll tax contributions, $41 billion from taxation of benefits, and $76 billion in interest)

■ Total expenditures from the combined OASI and DI trust funds amounted to $1.107 trillion in 2020.

■ Social Security paid benefits of $1.096 trillion in calendar year 2020. There were about 65 million beneficiaries at the end of the calendar year.

■ The projected actuarial deficit over the 75-year long-range period is 3.54 percent of taxable payroll—higher than the 3.21% projected in last year’s report.

■ During 2020, an estimated 175 million people had earnings covered by Social Security and paid payroll taxes.

■ The cost of $6.3 billion to administer the Social Security program in 2020 was a very low 0.6% of total expenditures.

■ The combined trust fund asset reserves earned interest at an effective annual rate of 2.6% in 2020.

The board of trustees usually comprises six members. Four serve by virtue of their positions with the federal government: Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, managing trustee; Kijakazi; Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra; and Labor Secretary Martin J. Walsh. The two public trustee positions are currently vacant.

View the 2021 Trustees Report at www.socialsecurity.gov/OACT/TR/2021/. ***(PR)***

After Ida, energy facilities in Gulf inching back to life

By DAVID KOENIG & PAUL WISEMAN
AP BUSINESS WRITERS

Oil companies began gradually restarting some of their refineries in Louisiana, and key fuel pipelines fully reopened Tuesday, providing hopeful signs that the region’s crucial energy industry can soon recover from Hurricane Ida’s onslaught.

Exxon Mobil said crews were starting to resume normal operations at its Hoover platform in the Gulf of Mexico that managed to avoid storm damage. And the company said its fuel terminal in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, restarted operations Monday.

And in a dose of good news for motorists on the East Coast, Colonial Pipeline said it restored flows late Monday to two pipelines that run from Houston to Greensboro, North Carolina, after crews had inspected the facilities. The reopening of the conduits, a major source of gasoline and other fuels, will help ease fears of big price spikes for consumers.

In addition, Philips 66 said its Gulf Coast lubricants plant in Sulphur, Louisiana, would reopen Tuesday, though one of its refineries in nearby Belle Chasse, which took on water, remained shut down. Valero said crews were checking its refineries in St. Charles and Meraux, which remained down Tuesday.

Ida ravaged the region’s power grid, leaving all of New Orleans and hundreds of thousands of other Louisiana residents in the dark with no clear timeline on when electricity would be restored. The refineries that are beginning to restart operations weren’t in the heart of Ida’s path and didn’t lose power, making the task of restarting much more manageable.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, people wait in line for gas Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021, in New Orleans, La. AP

Energy and chemical companies throughout the region have been surveying damage since Ida barreled onshore Sunday, bringing ferocious winds and heavy rain. The companies are focusing their efforts on both offshore platforms that are used to pump oil and natural gas from below the Gulf of Mexico and the refineries that turn the crude into finished products.

All told, nine Louisiana refineries, which collectively account for about 13% of the nation’s refining capacity, were forced to close, at least temporarily, by the storm, the U.S. Energy Department said Tuesday. The department noted that refinery operators can’t restart the plants until the power and other utilities they depend upon are restored. Some companies that said flooding was making it difficult to even reach some of their facilities.

Yet even with the disruptions at many refineries, analysts say they expect no major supply shortages. In part, that is because Gulf Coast inventories of gasoline and other petroleum products were above normal for this time of year, and oil stocks were in line with the five-year average.

On Tuesday, oil prices fell more than 1% before reversing some of that decline. Benchmark U.S. crude fell 71 cents, or about 1%, to settle at $68.50 in trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Analysts at banking giant Citi estimated that Ida could shave about one-tenth of a percentage point from U.S. economic growth in the third quarter, “which would be hardly noticeable against a background of otherwise strong growth.” They warned, however, that the storm could further drive up demand for used cars, building materials and workers, adding to inflation.

The Citi analysts said Ida’s toll would be significant but less than the $161 billion cost of Hurricane Katrina, which hit New Orleans in 2005, and the $125 billion lost to Hurricane Harvey, which flooded Houston, including many of its refineries, in 2017. Ida’s winds were stronger, but it didn’t create as much flooding as those earlier storms.

The impact will be felt beyond the energy industry. Agribusiness behemoth Cargill said a huge grain terminal in Louisiana suffered significant damage. Cargill said safety concerns and power outages were slowing its ability to assess the damage at the terminal, which handles crops exported to China and other countries, and the company declined to predict when the facility will operate again.

Escota

MEI’s Wendielyn Escota promoted to general manager

Marianas Eye Institute, a regional leader for exceptional eye care, has recently promoted one of its own to become the new general manager. Wendielyn Escota started working at MEI in 2011 as an eye care technician and has proven herself to be a leader and mentor to the talented team at MEI.

Escota comes from a strong hospitality background that shines through every interaction. She brings a wealth of knowledge in quality customer service and personal care. As one of a handful of eye care technicians on island who is a Certified Ophthalmic Assistant, Escota has shown the fortitude to handle difficult tasks seeing them through to the end. She earned her bachelor of arts degree in Business Management in 2021 while working full-time and raising her family.

“I am honored to have this opportunity to make a positive difference for not only our community but also for our wonderful team,” said Escota.

She spends her leisure time with husband, Jerry, and their three children: Codie, Jeremiah, and Eli.

MEI chief executive officer Russ Quinn said, “We’ve had our eye on Wendie for some time. She possesses all the necessary skills to raise Marianas Eye Institute to the next level. She positioned herself up the ranks and has developed a firm understanding of both the medical and business aspects of the organization. I am excited for her and our clinic.”

MEI has served the CNMI community for 25 years and is known as a regional leader in eye care, providing total eye care for the family, including express glasses, contact lenses, medical eye care, surgery and laser.

The institute is staffed by Dr. Keri Allen, the islands only ophthalmologist, and Dr. Mark Robertson, a magna cum laude graduate; along with 29 other highly talented full-time employees.

Located on Beach Road in Garapan, across 13 Fishermen’s Monument, MEI is open Monday through Saturday and accepts new patients as well as walk-ins. Call 235-9090 or visit https://marianaseye.com. ***(PR)***

Nation

IDA'S SWELTERING AFTERMATH:

No power, no water, no gasoline

Crews begin work on downed power lines leading to a fire station, Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021, in Waggaman, La., as residents try to recover from the effects of Hurricane Ida. AP

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Hundreds of thousands of Louisianans sweltered in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida on Tuesday with no electricity, no tap water, precious little gasoline and no clear idea of when things might improve.

Long lines that wrapped around the block formed at the few gas stations that had fuel and generator power to pump it. People cleared rotting food out of refrigerators. Neighbors shared generators and borrowed buckets of swimming pool water to bathe or to flush toilets.

"We have a lot of work ahead of us and no one is under the illusion that this is going to be a short process," Gov. John Bel Edwards said as the cleanup and rebuilding began across the soggy region in the oppressive late-summer heat.

New Orleans officials announced seven places around the city where people could get a meal and sit in air conditioning. The city was also using 70 transit buses as cooling sites and will have drive-thru food, water and ice distribution locations set up on Wednesday, Mayor LaToya Cantrell said. Edwards said state officials also were working to set up distribution locations in other areas.

Cantrell ordered a nighttime curfew Tuesday, calling it an effort to prevent crime after Hurricane Ida devastated the power system and left the city in darkness. Police Chief Shaun Ferguson said there had been some arrests for stealing.

The mayor also said she expects the main power company Entergy to be able to provide some electricity to the city by Wednesday evening, but stressed that doesn't mean a quick citywide restoration. Entergy was looking at two options to "begin powering critical infrastructure in the area such as hospitals, nursing homes and first responders," the company said in a news release.

Biden defends departure from 'forever war,' praises airlift

WASHINGTON (AP)—A defensive President Joe Biden on Tuesday called the U.S. airlift to extract more than 120,000 Americans, Afghans and other allies from Afghanistan to end a 20-year war an "extraordinary success," though more than 100 Americans and thousands of others were left behind.

Biden

Twenty-four hours after the last American C-17 cargo plane roared off from Kabul, Biden spoke to the nation and vigorously defended his decision to end America's longest war and withdraw all U.S. troops ahead of an Aug. 31 deadline.

"I was not going to extend this forever war," Biden declared from the White House. "And I was not going to extend a forever exit."

Biden has faced tough questions about the way the U.S. went about leaving Afghanistan—a chaotic evacuation with spasms of violence, including a suicide bombing last week that killed 13 American service members and 169 Afghans.

He is under heavy criticism, particularly from Republicans, for his handling of the evacuation. But he said it was inevitable that the final departure from two decades of war, first negotiated with the Taliban for May 1 by former President Donald Trump, would have been difficult, with likely violence, no matter when it was planned and conducted.

High winds threaten to whip up flames approaching Lake Tahoe

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. (AP)—A day after an explosive wildfire emptied a resort city at the southern tip of Lake Tahoe, a huge firefighting force braced for strong winds Tuesday as some residents in neighboring Nevada were ordered to evacuate.

The city of South Lake Tahoe, usually bustling with summer tourists, was eerily empty and the air thick and hazy with smoke from the Caldor Fire, one of two major fires burning in the same area. On Monday, roughly 22,000 residents jammed the city's main artery for hours after they were ordered to leave as the fire advanced, chewing up drought-stricken vegetation.

The National Weather Service warned that weather conditions through Wednesday would include low humidity, dry fuel and wind gusts up to 30 mph (48 kph).

"That's definitely not going to help the firefighting efforts," said Courtney Coats, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Forest Service.

The fire was 3 miles (5 kilometers) outside of South Lake Tahoe, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Battalion Chief Henry Herrera told KGO-TV.

ACROSS THE NATION

Couple dead at Hawaii assisted living center; note found

HONOLULU (AP)—An elderly couple with gunshot wounds died Tuesday at a Hawaii assisted living center and a note was left behind indicating they took their lives, police said. Honolulu Police Lt. Deena Thoemmes declined to detail the note's contents. She said police are investigating whether it was a murder-suicide or two suicides. The 86-year-old woman was a resident of The Plaza at Waikiki, while her 92-year-old husband lived nearby, Thoemmes said. The husband was visiting his wife in a sitting area of the facility's garage. "We are deeply saddened by today's fatal, domestic incident, which occurred in the parking garage of The Plaza at Waikiki," said Tricia Medeiros, chief operating officer of The Plaza Assisted Living. She said in a statement that the company was offering counseling services to its residents and employees.

Vigil held for slain US Marine in her home city

LAWRENCE, Mass. (AP)—A U.S. Marine who was among 13 killed in a suicide bombing in Afghanistan was honored Tuesday evening in her hometown. Officials in Lawrence, Massachusetts, held a vigil with Sgt. Johanny Rosario Pichardo's family at Veterans Memorial Stadium. Rosario, 25, died in the Aug. 26 bombing at the Kabul airport, where people were being evacuated amid the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. A dozen other U.S. service members and 169 Afghans were killed. Dozens attended a separate vigil in Rosario's memory last weekend in Boston that was hosted by Massachusetts Fallen Heroes, an organization founded by veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Rosario, who was of Dominican origin, served with the Naval Amphibious Force, Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade.

Navy helicopter crashes in ocean off Southern California

SAN DIEGO (AP)—A U.S. Navy helicopter crashed Tuesday in the ocean off Southern California during a routine flight from an aircraft carrier, military officials said. A search and rescue operation was launched after the MH-60S helicopter crashed around 4:30 p.m. about 60 nautical miles off San Diego, the Navy's U.S. Pacific Fleet said on Twitter. The crash happened while the aircraft was "conducting routine flight operations," according to the Navy. It had been aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln. "Search and rescue operations are ongoing with multiple Coast Guard and Navy air and surface assets," the tweet said. No other details were immediately available.

Asia

Police escort four of the eight suspected Islamist militants accused of the slayings of two men including a prominent gay rights activist five years ago, in an elevator as they head towards a court in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021. AP

Bangladesh court sentences 6 militants to death in slayings

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—A Bangladesh anti-terrorism tribunal on Tuesday sentenced six Islamist militants to death in the brutal slayings of two men, including a prominent gay rights activist, five years ago, lawyers said.

In April 2016, assailants hacked to death Xulhaz Mannan, an editor of Bangladesh's first gay rights magazine who had worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development, and his friend Mahbub Rabbi Tonoy. The killings in an apartment in Dhaka were part of a wave of attacks targeting atheists, moderates and foreigners.

Judge Mojibur Rahman of the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal ruled that the six defendants were responsible for the killings of the two men but acquitted two others. Police had indicted eight suspected militants in the case.

Four of the defendants were present amid tight security in the court Tuesday while the two others remain at large. Prosecutors identified all of them as members of Ansar-al-Islam, a domestic militant group.

Defense lawyers vowed to appeal the ruling to the High Court.

Mannan, who also previously worked as a U.S. Embassy protocol officer, was editor of the gay rights magazine Roopbaan as well as a cousin of former Foreign Minister Dipu Moni of the governing Awami League party.

In 2016, Bangladesh was riven by a wave of deadly attacks on foreigners, religious minorities and secular bloggers, raising fears that religious extremists were gaining a foothold in the country, despite its traditions of secularism and tolerance.

The killings were claimed by various militant groups including Ansar-al-Islam and al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, or AQIS. The domestic groups Jumatul Mujahedeen Bangladesh and Harkatul Jihad were also blamed for some attacks.

ASIA BRIEFS

Pakistan says 11 Islamic State militants killed in raid

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistan's counter-terrorism units raided a hideout of the Islamic State group in the restive southwestern Baluchistan province before dawn on Tuesday, setting off a shootout that killed 11 militants, the police said. The units, acting on intelligence, carried out the raid in the district of Mastung, where IS militants had recently killed two police officers. The police said suicide belts, hand grenades and assault rifles were confiscated in the raid. The counter-terrorism department provided no further details and the nationality of the slain militants was not immediately known. The counter-terrorism police is a special branch of the police that fights militant groups. Quetta is the capital of Baluchistan province where IS group has claimed several attacks in recent years. IS has regional affiliates in both Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan.

Indian economy grows by 20.1%, raising hopes of recovery

NEW DELHI (AP)—India's economy grew by 20.1% in the April-June quarter from the same period a year earlier, when it suffered a record contraction, the government announced Tuesday, raising hopes of an economic recovery. It was India's fastest pace of growth since it began publishing quarterly gross domestic product figures in 1996, and was far higher than the January-March quarter, when the economy grew 1.6%. But economists say the latest growth figures are deceptive because they are calculated from last year's smaller base. India's economy, battered by the coronavirus and a monthslong nationwide lockdown, contracted 24.4% in the April-June quarter in 2020, pulling the country into recession. A country enters a technical recession if its economy contracts for two successive quarters.

Japan ministry seeks 2.6% defense hike amid China worries

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's Defense Ministry on Tuesday asked for a 2.6% increase over this year's record budget as it seeks to further strengthen the country's military in the face of China's growing assertiveness in the region. The ministry's budget sought 5.48 trillion yen ($49.86 billion) for the year starting April 1, 2022, in what could be a record high if approved by the Finance Ministry and parliament later this year, after a nine-year consecutive increase. Japan's concerns about China's increasingly assertive military actions in the region, as well as Beijing's growing tension with Taiwan and rivalry with the United States, were specifically noted in this year's defense report adopted in July. The report said China's increased military capability and the lack of clarity regarding Chinese military spending is "a matter of grave concern" and criticized China's maritime activity in and around Japanese-claimed waters.

World

UN chief urges countries to aid Afghans in their 'hour of need'

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The United Nations chief urged all nations to help the people of Afghanistan "in their darkest hour of need," saying Tuesday that almost half the population needs humanitarian assistance to survive and the country faces the threat of basic services collapsing completely.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed "grave concern at the deepening humanitarian crisis in the country" in a statement on the first day of Taliban rule after the withdrawal of the last U.S. forces from Afghanistan.

He offered some grim statistics of the looming "humanitarian catastrophe": 18 million Afghans need aid to survive, one in three don't know where their next meal will come from, over half of all children under age 5 are expected to become "acutely malnourished" in the next year, and every day people are losing access to basic goods and services.

"Amid a severe drought and with harsh winter conditions on the horizon, extra food, shelter and health supplies must be urgently fast-tracked into the country," Guterres said.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the current $1.3 billion U.N. humanitarian appeal for Afghanistan is only 39% funded. Guterres said a new emergency appeal for the next four months is expected next week.

"For us," Dujarric said, "the day after is just another day in Kabul. We've been present in Afghanistan for over 60 years, and we are remaining and standing shoulder to shoulder with the Afghan people."

He said a U.N. assessment team went out in Kabul on Tuesday. While aid operations have not been able to resume in the capital, he said, a World Health Organization plane with supplies was able to land in Mazar-e-Sharif in the north on Monday and the World Food Program has also been able to resume operations in the country.

Afghan families gather to receive food stuff distributing by an Islamabad-based Christian organization on the outskirts of Chaman, a border town in the Pakistan's southwestern Baluchistan province, Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021. AP

WORLD BRIEFS

Greek coast guard intercepts yacht, sailboat with migrants

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Greek coast guard authorities say they have intercepted a yacht carrying 124 people believed to be migrants just off the coast of the Cycladic island of Milos, nearly three days after intercepting nearly three dozen others in a sailboat on the coast of a southern Greek island. The coast guard said it was tipped off by a member of the public about the yacht, which was located in the early hours of Tuesday near a beach on the southern coast of Milos. All 124 people on board were transported to the coast, while the yacht, which was found to have taken on a small amount of water, was confiscated, the coast guard said. The nationalities of those on board were not immediately made public. In a separate incident announced Tuesday, the coast guard said it intercepted 35 migrants on Sunday and arrested two people, ages 36 and 71, on suspicion of people-smuggling, after receiving a distress call about a sailboat on the southern Greek island of Kythira.

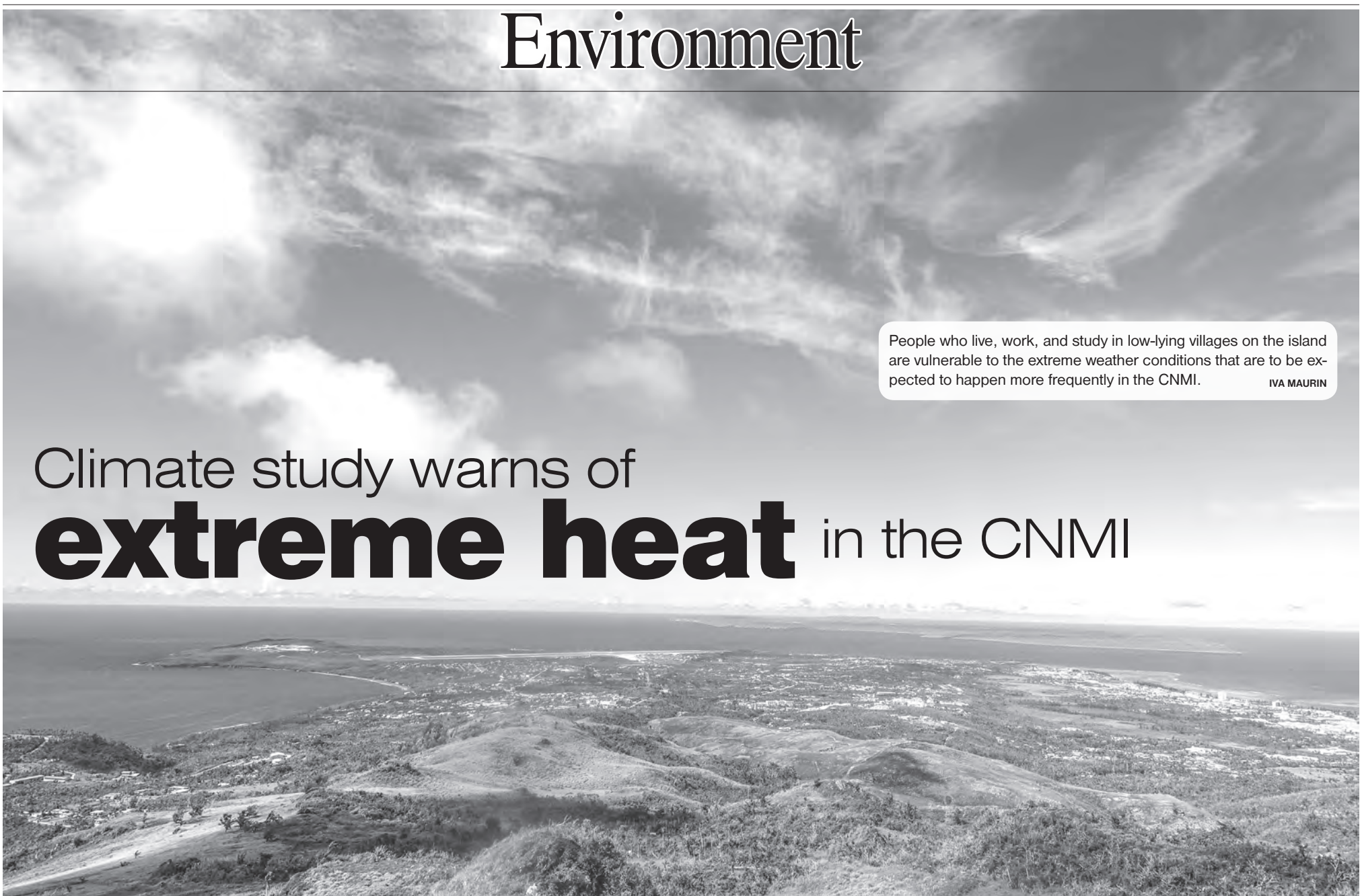
Saudi TV: Drone attack on airport wounds 8, damages plane

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—A bomb-laden drone on Tuesday crashed into an airport in southwestern Saudi Arabia, wounding eight people and damaging a civilian plane, Saudi state television reported, the latest assault on the kingdom amid its grinding war in neighboring Yemen. The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen blamed the assault on Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, saying it was the second such strike on Abha airport in the last 24 hours. An earlier ballistic missile attack scattered shrapnel across the tarmac but caused no casualties. The Houthis did not claim responsibility for the strikes and its military spokesman did not answer calls seeking comment. Saudi forces said they downed the drone, and that their interception sent fragments flying that punctured small holes in a passenger plane, shattered glass and wounded citizens of Bangladesh, Nepal and India. One Bangladeshi man remained in critical condition, the coalition said, without offering further details about the assault.

Transplant for mushroom-poisoned Afghan boy; brother in coma

WARSAW, Poland (AP)—Doctors at Poland's main children's hospital plan to carry out a liver transplant on a 6-year-old Afghan boy who ate highly poisonous mushrooms with his family, but they said Tuesday his 5-year-old brother is in a coma and near death. The boys and their older sister, recently evacuated from Afghanistan, were hospitalized last week. The family picked and ate highly poisonous death cap mushrooms in the forest near the refugee center where they were staying in Podkowa Lesna, near Warsaw. Doctors at the Center for Children's Health Institute said the older brother is to undergo a transplant on Tuesday. He remains in a life-threatening condition. The younger brother is undergoing tests to see if he is brain dead. Their 17-year-old sister is in stable condition at the hospital, as are other family members, who were hospitalized elsewhere. Poland evacuated the family at Britain's request after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. The father had worked for the British in Afghanistan.

Environment



People who live, work, and study in low-lying villages on the island are vulnerable to the extreme weather conditions that are to be expected to happen more frequently in the CNMI. IVA MAURIN

Climate study warns of **extreme heat** in the CNMI

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

Hot days are getting more frequent. Expect it to get even worse.

A 2021 climate assessment report on the CNMI disclosed that the annual number of hot days in the Marianas has increased, and subsequently, the annual number of cool nights has dropped.

According to the report, *Climate Change in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: Indicators and Considerations for Key Sectors*, air temperature measurements at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport from 2006 to 2020, where the number of hot days—90°F and above—are recorded, show an increasing trend.

Compared to fewer than 50 in 2006, hot days on Saipan have ballooned to over 150 last year.

This may sound harmless—like a simple temperature talk—but this could trigger a full-blown climate crisis on island. How? Extreme heat would mean the vulnerable in the community could experience heat strokes and heat-related illnesses. It means increasing incidences of wildfires, sea level rise, and coral bleaching. And of course, it also means stronger typhoons, flooding, lost crops and wildlife, food insecurity, and again, homes getting damaged.

ON THE NET

- https://opd.gov.mp/library/agency/department-of-public-works/

The island experienced a taste of this in 2018, when Super Typhoon Yutu struck. Right now, the CNMI may be rebuilding, but many have yet to fully recover.

> **The big question is: Are we ready for it?**

Also, the big question is, are we ready for these extreme events happening more frequently? Are we proactively rebuilding to respond to the many what could be's?

So, what could happen?

The report states that the Marianas is expected to have more frequent and intense extreme rainfall events. Moreover, for the CNMI, the projection of the likely overall scenario is that there will be fewer but stronger storms.

In addition, the report also stated that sea level rise will "almost certainly continue" in the CNMI, that a 3.8-foot rise is expected by 2100, and that it is possible that it could be even higher.

These heavy rainfall events and sea level rise mean increase in potential flooding, erosion, and runoffs, which by now we all know affects everyone, particularly those living, having offices, and doing business in low-lying areas,between Susupe and Tanapag, with Garapan and Lower Base already identified as priority points in even earlier studies.

These are in addition to saltwater intrusion into the groundwater aquifers (source for drinking water, irrigation, among others), including the damage it would cause to corals and the rest of the islands' marine biodiversity.

Further, the report also states that with the global increase in sea surface temperature, the frequency of heat stress—which causes coral reef bleaching—is rising in the CNMI. Compared to just 12 days per year in 1982 to 1991, the average has increased to 43 days per year in 2007 to 2016.

The projection is that unless coral species adapt to the warming of the ocean, the CNMI will "begin to experience annual severe bleaching before 2045, and some areas are expected to experience annual severe bleaching beginning in about 2030."

Farmers and fisherfolk will be among those who will be the first to get affected by extreme heat and weather changes in the CNMI. IVA MAURIN

With this, the report adds, we can expect that there will be fewer fish to catch—at least by 20% by 2050.

How are we going to be affected?

The report warns that children, older adults, low-income communities, and persons with disabilities are at greater risk. It also laid down the following critical points that extreme heat and weather changes could bring to the CNMI:

1. As hot days become more frequent, children will get affected more as they have a "higher rate of heat stroke and heat-related illnesses than adults."

2. The elderly and persons with disabilities are more vulnerable, such as during storms when there are power outages or when evacuations are required.

3. Farmers, fisher people, tourism and construction workers, and outdoor laborers will be some of the first to get affected.

4. People who still live in wooden or tin homes are going to be more vulnerable than those who already had their houses reinforced.

5. People who live, work, go to school in low-lying parts of the island, such as along the coasts and in flood-prone areas, are going to be more affected.

The CNMI is advised to prepare for these, particularly in the health and disaster management front—to proactively prepare for increased wildfires, frequent floods, food insecurity, and impacts to water supply.

The report also recommended that the vulnerable be made part of the planning process, including in terms of plans on emergency response, should there be incidences of extreme heat and typhoons.

For anyone interested, the full report, *Climate Change in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: Indicators and Considerations for Key Sectors*, can be downloaded from the Office of Planning and Development website: https://opd.gov.mp/library/agency/department-of-public-works/

Life & Style

Lawyer: Britney Spears 'will not be extorted' by father

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Britney Spears and her new attorney say her father is trying to get about $2 million in payments before stepping down from the conservatorship that controls her life and money, a move they liken to extortion in a court filing Tuesday.

The document filed by lawyer Mathew Rosengart says the upcoming scheduled accounting of the conservatorship, which James Spears says he wants completed before he steps down, will mean significant payments for him.

"Britney Spears will not be extorted," the filing says. "Mr. Spears's blatant attempt to barter suspension and removal in exchange for approximately $2 million in payments, on top of the millions already reaped from Ms. Spears's estate by Mr. Spears and his associates, is a non-starter."

A representative for James Spears did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The filing is a supplement to Rosengart's July petition on Britney Spears' behalf for the removal and suspension of James Spears, which will be addressed at a Sept. 29 hearing.

In his response, James Spears revealed that he had already been planning to step down from his daughter's conservatorship, which he has controlled at least in part since it was established in 2008.

But James Spears offered no timetable for his departure, saying it would come only after several lingering issues, including the next accounting, are resolved.

James Spears said he would fight any attempt to force him out, that there were no grounds for doing so, and that he has always only acted in his daughter's best interest.

Rosengart's latest filing contends that while there is plenty of misconduct to address, it is not yet the issue.

"The only question before the Court—which has, unfortunately, been lost for years—is whether Mr. Spears' prompt suspension and removal are in best the interests of Britney Spears," the filing says, later adding that "the unequivocal answer is yes."

Twenty years later, a tale of 9/11 survivors takes shape

NEW YORK (AP)—Larry Kirwan traces the roots of his novel "Rockaway Blue" to the Saturday night after Sept. 11, 2001, when the band he led, Black 47, played Connolly's Pub in Manhattan. The crowd would look to the door each time it opened, and cheer at the sight of a familiar face.

Johnny's here! Mary's here! They're alive.

Black 47 attracted a heavily working class Irish-American audience, a reflection of what they saw onstage, including many of the cops and firefighters whose ranks suffered after responding to the World Trade Center attack.

The characters that populate "Rockaway Blue" are drawn from that audience, from the Rockaway Beach section of Queens, New York. That's "Black 47 country," filled with people Kirwan says he knows well.

"There's a lot of pain that's still out there," said Kirwan, 66, a prolific writer of novels, plays and songs. "I lost two good friends, but I didn't lose a family member, and that's really intense. I really wanted to give it back to the people, to tell their story, because no one else is going to do it."

In the book, Jimmy Murphy is a retired New York City detective whose golden boy son, Brian, also a cop, died after rushing in to the North Tower. The father embarks on a search for the secret Brian died with.

That's the shorthand. Through it all you learn the varied and complex ways Brian's death affected the wife he left behind, his firefighter brother, his mother and, most poignantly, the father he had already climbed past on the career ladder.

Kirwan created similar characters on Black 47's 2004 album, "New York Town," that left him unsatisfied.

He developed the story for a play, "The Heart Has a Mind of Its Own," but as he listened to the audience's applause on opening night, Kirwan was cursing himself.

He felt he hadn't nailed Jimmy, who was cheating on his wife in the opening scene of the play. Jimmy nearly did so in "Rockaway Blue" with a colleague at the bar where he worked, but his wife, Maggie, fights for him.

"I began to see, if you're going to get this story, you've got to get inside the heads of these characters and you can't really do that in a play that much," Kirwan said. "I realized what the story was missing was the author's voice."

It took nearly 20 years, but now he's proud of the story.

"I'm proud that I got it," said Kirwan, who grew up in Wexford, Ireland, and came to New York in the 1970s. "I know what it's about. I know that it sums up the regular people of New York who went through this, who either lost someone or were deeply affected by it, that it resonates with people."

Alicia Keys adapts 'Girl On Fire' into young adult novel

NEW YORK (AP)—For Alicia Keys, "Girl On Fire" isn't just a million-selling single, but the title and inspiration for a young adult graphic novel scheduled for next year.

HarperCollins Publishers announced Tuesday that "Girl On Fire," the story of 14-year-old Lolo Wright and her telekinetic powers, will come out March 1. The book is cowritten by Andrew Weiner and illustrated by Brittney Williams.

"When I wrote 'Girl On Fire,' I knew I was writing it for that girl in the way back row who needed someone to tell her there's nothing you can't do, that nothing is impossible," Keys said in a statement. "When Andrew and I came up with the idea of translating the song into a young adult graphic novel, I knew that I wanted it to be about a girl coming to realize the strength she's always had. There's a little Lolo in all of us—we all have the power inside to do what we never even thought we could—and I'm so proud and crazy excited to be able to share her story with you. You're going to fall in love with Lolo."

Alicia Keys performs at the Billboard Music Awards in Los Angeles on May 20, 2021. HarperCollins Publishers announced Tuesday that "Girl On Fire," a young adult graphic novel inspired by Key's song, will be released in March. The book is cowritten by Andrew Weiner and illustrated by Brittney Williams.
AP PHOTO/CHRIS PIZZELLO, FILE

A 15-time Grammy winner, Keys has also written the books "Tears for Water: Poetry & Lyrics" and the memoir "More Myself: A Journey."

Boyfriend sets 'do not disturb' policy for visit to ex

DEAR ABBY: I've been dating a great guy for a year and a half. For eight years before we met, he dated a woman with teenage daughters. He never had children, so they are as close to his own kids as he will ever have. He was recently invited to the graduation party of one of the daughters. It will be a weeklong trip, since they have moved across the country. He intends to stay awhile and visit with the girls and his old girlfriend. I'm grudgingly OK with that.

The part I'm having real trouble with is that he told me he won't call or text me the entire week that he is gone. He has apologized in advance but says he wants to concentrate on the girls and have a break from everything. We usually talk every day, and this seems extreme, especially since he will be spending a week with the woman who broke up with him and left him heartbroken (his words). He realizes his behavior isn't normal and assures me we are OK, but I'm so hurt. Am I right to be this upset, and how do I get past this?

SILENT TREATMENT IN ILLINOIS

DEAR SILENT TREATMENT: I understand why you would find it upsetting that your boyfriend of a year and a half has unilaterally decided to go radio silent under these circumstances. It is a radical change of his behavior pattern, and I'm sure most women would be at least taken aback. Before he leaves, request that he send you a text confirming he has arrived safely, and another telling you when he has started back and expects to be home.

The way to "get past this" is to stay very busy in his absence. Make plans with friends during the evenings so you won't be sitting alone at home, stewing. And when he returns, do NOT give him the third degree.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am a 41-year-old mother of three, married less than two years. I now realize what a selfish lover my husband is. He expects things from me and refuses to reciprocate, which leaves me unhappy and unsatisfied. When I ask him to change things up or return the same foreplay, it results in us not connecting at all. How do I get him to be less selfish without hurting his feelings? I'm on the verge of cheating.

IT'S STALE IN THE MIDWEST

DEAR IT'S STALE: Cheating won't help your situation. It will likely make it worse. Instead of dealing with a selfish or sexually repressed husband, you will have, in addition, one who is outraged when he discovers your infidelity. Find a time when you are both calm to talk to him. Tell him you love him, but your sex life is unsatisfactory, and if he loves you, he will agree to talk things out with a licensed marriage and family therapist. If he refuses or things don't improve, you may want to consult a lawyer.

DEAR ABBY
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

BANG! YOU'RE DEAD!
NO I'M NOT. YOU MISSED!
I DID NOT! YOU CHEATER!
I'M HERE TALKING TO YOU, AREN'T I?
OK, THEN.. BANG!
MY, WHAT A MISERABLE SHOT YOU ARE!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

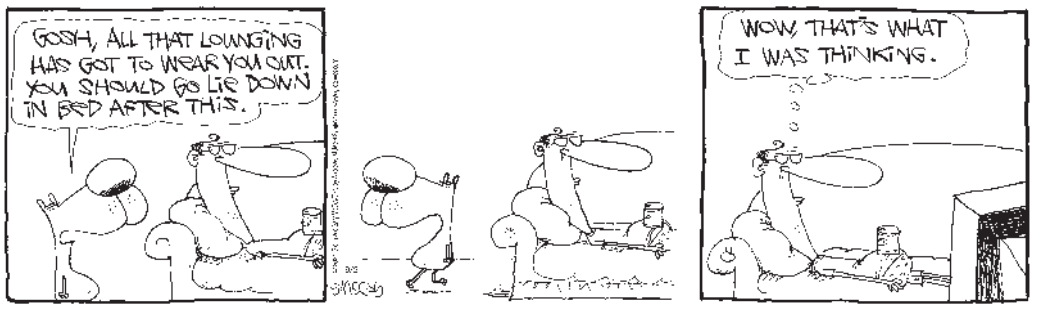
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

HAVE YOU TRIED BRAINSTORMING IDEAS FOR YOUR PICTURE BOOK?
YOU JUST WRITE DOWN WORDS AND THOUGHTS AS THEY POP INTO YOUR HEAD.
HERE. THIS IS FROM A BRAINSTORM SESSION I DID THIS MORNING.
"DONUTS, CAKE, ICING, POPCORN, PIZZA, BBQ..."
YEAH, I SHOULDN'T BRAINSTORM ON AN EMPTY STOMACH.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Par
5 Donate
9 Journal
12 Jai —
13 Cannes milk
14 One-time link
15 Boston Common rest spot
17 King, in Cannes
18 Sailor's assent
19 Like wine barrels
21 — novo (anew)
22 Creche figure
24 Wrestling style
27 Fa follower
28 Transcript stats
31 Actress Longoria
32 Sort
33 Hollywood's Thurman
34 Small pie
36 USN officers
37 Senior moment?
38 Sneakers, slangily
40 AMA member
41 "Top Chef" host Lakshmi
43 Pooh's mopey pal
47 First numero
48 Jessica Alba TV series
51 Trim the grass
52 Engagement gift
53 Patricia of "Hud"
54 Raggedy doll
55 Historic times
56 Congers

DOWN

1 Wine valley
2 Skin care brand
3 Exceptional
4 Japanese emperor
5 Jubilation
6 Actor McKellen
7 London's Old —
8 Community spirit
9 Delphinium
10 Oklahoma tribe
11 Profit
16 "See ya!"
20 Summer mo.
22 Sudden shocks
23 Lodge members
24 "Game, —, match!"
25 Sch. founded by Jefferson
26 Price reduction
27 Lingerie fabric
29 I love (Lat.)
30 "Cheers" barkeep
35 Singer McGraw
37 Hawthorne's Hester
39 Military group
40 Narc's agcy.
41 Cougar
42 Shortly
43 Heart charts (Abbr.)
44 Curved molding
45 Authentic
46 Right angles
49 Melody
50 Genetic letters

Solution time: 24 mins.

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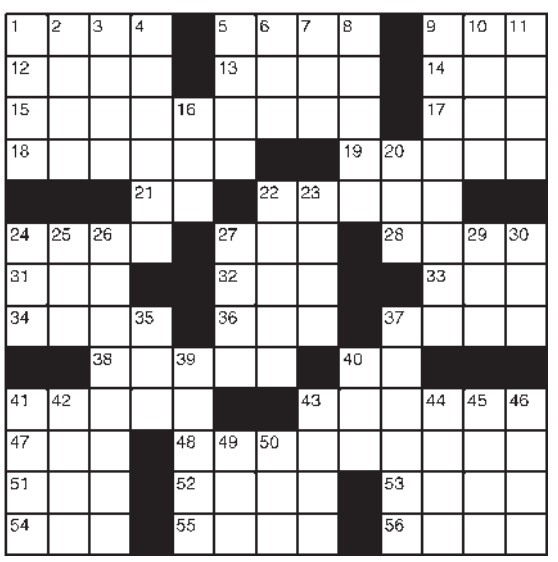
A	H	K	S		L	S	U		S	A	N	S

Yesterday's answer 9-2



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Zedd, 32; Salma Hayek, 55; Keanu Reeves, 57; Mark Harmon, 70.

Happy Birthday: Connect with people who share your concerns this year. You'll find a way to endorse your beliefs and bring about the changes you want to happen. Step into the spotlight, and be the one to take on the role of leadership. Your insight and dedication to get things done will open doors to positions that have been unavailable in the past. Your numbers are 4, 17, 26, 29, 31, 38, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Surround yourself with supportive people who have your back and offer suggestions that encourage you to pursue what makes you happy. An emotional plea will stabilize a meaningful relationship and make your life less stressful. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Uncertainty will prevail if you have too many options. If you pay attention and consider what makes you happy, it will be easier to figure out what to do next. Physical activity will help you blow off steam and ease stress. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Rely on common sense, the connections you have and your charm to help you reach your goal. Speak up on your behalf and you will offset being put in a precarious position by someone who doesn't share your beliefs. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Get involved in something unique or unfamiliar. It will give you the incentive to make changes at home that help you put the past behind you and start anew. Refuse to let an emotional matter spin out of control. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Refuse to let the changes taking place around you upset your plans. Don't offer information about your intentions to anyone who may try to interfere. A chance to spend more time with someone you love will help you set your priorities straight. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Push yourself, embrace change and be open to suggestions. Refuse to let emotional matters infiltrate into business or financial prospects. You need to keep a clear head if you want to come out on top. Don't get emotional; start moving. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Don't throw caution out the window when dealing with matters that can influence your position or reputation. Do your homework, and offer only the information that will protect you from being labeled as "uncompromising." Charm and mindfulness are encouraged. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Inhale; exhale. Keep life simple, take care of your responsibilities and navigate your way to a place that makes you feel good about who you are, what you accomplish and what you can look forward to with pride and excitement. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Use your intelligence, strength and ability to make the most with what you've got. You'll ward off any opposition and invite contributions and the support necessary to get things done your way. Approach life, love and responsibilities with enthusiasm. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* You'll face plenty of questions if you use emotional manipulation or sport a pushy attitude. Relax and let others do as they please. It will give you the chance to put your house in order and do your own thing. Keep the peace. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* A money matter is best handled with finesse. Use your intelligence, and you'll develop a plan that can turn a little into a lot. Don't leave anything to chance or up to someone else if you want to avoid disappointment. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Choose friends wisely if you want to attract the right kind of people. The associates you align yourself with will determine what transpires. Partnerships based on truth, equality and for the good of all involved will help you overcome adversity. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are adaptable, meticulous and personable. You are informative and clever.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

				3	4			
5			8		9			2
9								3
2	5			9			6	
8								5
	3			7			9	1
7								8
1			5		6			9
			4	2				

Difficulty Level ★★★ 9/02

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	7	8	3	1	5	2	9	6
9	1	2	4	6	7	3	8	5
5	6	3	9	8	2	7	1	4
3	5	9	8	4	6	1	2	7
7	2	6	1	5	3	9	4	8
8	4	1	2	7	9	6	5	3
1	3	5	6	9	8	4	7	2
6	8	4	7	2	1	5	3	9
2	9	7	5	3	4	8	6	1

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

'BLINDSPOT' (TV SERIES) Solution: 11 letters

E	S	N	E	P	S	U	S	A	W	A	Y	U	L	I
N	D	U	F	F	E	L	B	A	G	C	N	A	O	O
E	E	G	V	M	T	S	N	E	A	E	S	E	Y	S
M	A	T	A	A	M	O	A	R	C	I	O	R	A	C
I	L	G	S	R	I	R	I	O	K	D	O	U	L	A
E	D	H	A	T	R	P	D	R	E	M	A	B	N	R
S	A	A	C	I	S	E	O	N	E	F	E	O	O	I
T	H	A	N	N	D	Y	A	M	E	T	S	B	M	A
R	E	C	O	G	W	J	O	D	H	R	E	O	I	F
U	A	C	I	E	E	C	E	A	E	R	E	O	S	Y
G	R	U	N	R	T	R	N	T	T	E	A	M	S	A
G	O	R	T	O	A	Y	T	N	O	I	S	S	I	M
L	M	E	D	L	T	A	T	T	O	O	S	E	N	A
E	A	T	S	A	P	O	I	S	O	N	I	N	G	I
S	N	O	I	T	A	G	I	T	S	E	V	N	I	N

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Action, Arms, Away, Bethany, Boom, Bureau, Coded, Conspiracy, Cure, Danger, Deal, Dotcom, Duffel Bag, Edgar Reade, Enemies, Federal, Gear, Hear, Investigation, Jane Doe, Loyal, Main, Martin Gero, Mayfair, Memory, Missing, Mission, New York, Oscar, Past, Patterson, Poisoning, Remi, Rich, Robert, Roman, Struggles, Suspense, Tasha, Tattoos, Team

Yesterday's Answer: Spiritual

The NEW **Treasury 43** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com; or call 1-800-642-6480.

Rays win 9th straight, Bogaerts tests positive for virus

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Randy Arozarena, rookie Wander Franco and the Tampa Bay Rays won their ninth straight game, breaking away from Boston 8-5 Tuesday night soon after Red Sox shortstop Xander Bogaerts was pulled because of a positive COVID-19 test.

Bogaerts hit an RBI single in the first inning, but was replaced defensively in the second.

It was announced before the game that Boston reliever Hirokazu Sawamura tested positive as a virus surge that started last week continues having a daily impact on the playoff-contending Red Sox.

Franco and Austin Meadows had RBI singles and Yandy Díaz hit a two-run double during a six-run third for the Rays, who are a franchise-best 36 games over .500 at 84-48.

Arozarena homered in the second for the AL East leaders.

Ryan Yarbrough (8-4) allowed two runs and five hits in six innings. Dietrich Enns earned his fifth save.

Brad Peacock (0-1) gave up five runs, two hits, two walks and hit a batter over 2 1/3 innings in his first big league appearance since last Sept. 10 with Houston.

Tampa Bay Rays' Francisco Mejia, center, and Kevin Kiermaier, right, celebrate with Austin Meadows after Mejia and Kiermaier scored on an RBI single by Wander Franco off Boston Red Sox pitcher Brad Peacock during the third inning of a baseball game Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021, in St. Petersburg, Fla. AP

Mets 3, Marlins 1, 2nd game
Mets 6, Marlins 5, 1st game

In New York, Michael Conforto delivered a two-out hit that sent Javier Báez bolting home to cap a five-run rally in the ninth inning, then homered to lift New York over Miami for a pair of wins over the Marlins.

In the afternoon opener — which was the completion of a nine-inning game suspended one out into the top of the first on April 11—Conforto's single scored the tying run and Báez, too.

Báez earned cheers from a fanbase he insulted days earlier by sprinting home when left fielder Jorge Alfaro misplayed the ball to cap a five-run inning and give the Mets a win in the opener.

The win in the second game, which was seven innings, gave the Mets three straight victories.

Conforto hit a two-run homer off rookie Edward Cabrera (0-1) .

Aaron Loup (4-0) earned the win, and Edwin Diaz earned his 27th save.

In the first game, Jeurys Familia (8-3) got the win. Dylan Floro (5-5) got the loss.

Angels 6, Yankees 4

In Anaheim, Calif., Shohei Ohtani stole home, Jared Walsh hit a three-run homer and Los Angeles hung on late to send New York to its fourth straight loss.

Phil Gosselin had a two-run single for the Angels before their troublesome bullpen preserved their third straight victory. Raisel Iglesias pitched a perfect ninth for his 29th save.

Anthony Rizzo and Gary Sánchez homered for the Yankees, whose skid following their 13-game winning streak continued despite 10 hits at Angel Stadium. Aaron Judge had an RBI single and Giancarlo Stanton added a sacrifice fly.

Jameson Taillon (8-5) took his first loss in 16 starts since May 31 for the Yankees, allowing six runs on five hits and two walks.

Jimmy Herget (1-1) got the win in his Angels debut with 1 2/3 innings of one-hit relief.

Padres 3, Diamondbacks 0

In Phoenix, Blake Snell threw seven no-hit innings for San Diego before being pulled, and pinch-hitter David Peralta blooped a single into shallow left field in the eighth as the Padres blanked Arizona.

Peralta's single off Pierce Johson was one of just three hits for the Diamondbacks. Mark Melancon gave up two singles in the ninth before striking out Pavin Smith for his 36th save.

Manny Machado hit a two-run homer for the Padres.

Snell (7-5) struck out 10 and walked two but needed 107 pitches in seven dominant innings. Arizona starter Zac Gallen (2-8) gave up three runs over six innings.

Brewers 6, Giants 2

In San Francisco, Lorenzo Cain homered and added an RBI single, and Milwaukee won its second straight over San Francisco.

All-Star right-hander Brandon Woodruff (9-7) struck out eight in six innings to win back-to-back starts for the first time since late June. He allowed five hits and one run with three walks.

Christian Yelich singled twice and scored two runs, extending his hitting streak to 10 games.

Brandon Belt hit his 20th home run for San Francisco. Wilmer Flores also connected. The Giants struck out 15 times and have lost four of five.

Johnny Cueto (7-7) allowed six runs and 10 hits.

Dodgers 3, Braves 2

In Los Angeles, Corey Seager hit a tiebreaking double in the eighth inning, lifting Los Angeles to a victory over Atlanta.

Atlanta lost All-Star second baseman Ozzie Albies after he fouled a ball off his left knee in the fifth and had to be carried off the field.

Mookie Betts drew a leadoff walk from Tyler Matzek (0-4) and scored from first on Seager's hit to deep right-center, giving the Dodgers their first lead of the game. Betts' homer in the fourth left the Dodgers trailing 2-1.

The NL East-leading Braves dropped their sixth straight at Dodger Stadium, where they've lost nine of 10.

Blake Treinen (5-5) struck out the side in the eighth and earned the win. Kenley Jansen retired the side in the ninth for his 30th save.

Former Dodger Joc Pederson sent a solo shot into the right-field pavilion in the third.

Phillies 12, Nationals 6

In Washington, Bryce Harper hit a go-ahead single against his former team as part of a six-run sixth inning, Rafael Marchán, Andrew McCutchen and Brad Miller hit two-run homers, and Philadelphia beat Washington for its fifth straight victory.

Carter Kieboom homered for Washington, which has lost four in a row and six of seven. The Nationals completed a 7-20 August, their worst full month since going 5-16 in April 2009.

The Phillies took control against tiring starter Patrick Corbin (7-14) and the Nationals' erratic bullpen in the sixth. Corbin allowed six runs in five-plus innings.

Bailey Falter (2-0) pitched 1 2/3 scoreless innings for the victory.

Athletics 9, Tigers 3

In Detroit, Matt Chapman hit a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the third inning and cleared the fences again in the ninth for his 23rd of the season, helping Oakland defeat Detroit.

Mark Canha homered as Oakland won its third straight after losing six in a row. The Tigers have lost four consecutive games, scoring a total of eight runs in those setbacks.

Deolis Guerra (3-1) pitched 1 1/3 perfect innings after Cole Irvin started and lasted just 4 2/3 innings, giving up three runs on seven hits and two walks.

Tarik Skubal (8-12) was roughed up, giving up six runs on seven hits and three walks over five innings.

Orioles 4, Blue Jays 2

In Toronto, Keegan Akin allowed one run through five innings and won consecutive starts for the first time, Ramón Urías hit a go-ahead double in the sixth inning, and Baltimore beat Toronto.

Akin (2-8) allowed two hits, walked three, and struck out five. Cole Sulser finished in the ninth for his sixth save in eight chances.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and Danny Jansen hit solo home runs for the Blue Jays, who had their three-game win streak snapped.

Hyun Jin Ryu(12-8) allowed three runs and three hits in 5 2/3 innings.

White Sox 4, Pirates 2

In Chicago, Yasmani Grandal and Jose Abreu homered, and five relievers combined for 4 2/3 innings of two-hit ball as Chicago doubled up Pittsburgh.

Grandal hit a solo homer to lead off the second, and Abreu hit his 28th homer in the third.

The Sox hold a 10-game lead in the AL Central and won for the fourth time in five games. The Pirates lost for the fourth time in six games.

Michael Kopech (4-2) picked up the win. Bryse Wilson (2-6) took the loss.

Indians 7, Royals 2

In Kansas City, Mo., Amed Rosario became the first player on record to go 5 for 5 with five RBIs, an inside-the-park homer and a drive over the fence, and Cleveland beat Kansas City.

Rosario had the first five RBI game of his career and matched a career high in hits. He's the first player since at least 1920, when RBIs became an official stat, to go 5 for 5 with five RBIs and both types of homer in the same game, according to STATS.

The Indians also got a two-run homer from Bobby Bradley.

Zach Plesac (9-4) pitched two-hit ball over seven scoreless innings, striking out seven without a walk allowed.

Jakob Junis (2-4) allowed three runs on four hits in 4 2/3 innings. Rosario drove in all three runs.

Rangers 4, Rockies 3

In Arlington, Texas, Nathaniel Lowe had a home run and an RBI single among his three hits, Leody Taveras homered for the second straight game and Texas hung on to beat Colorado for its third straight win.

Jordan Lyles (7-11) won for the second time in three starts despite allowing solo homers to Sam Hilliard, C.J. Cron and Ryan McMahon. Lyles gave up six hits, struck out seven and walked one. Spencer Patton pitched a perfect ninth to earn his second save in five opportunities.

Austin Gomber (9-9) allowed all four runs and four hits in 4 1/3 innings, and hasn't won since Aug. 7. Gomber struck out two and walked six.

Cubs 3, Twins 1

In Minneapolis, Frank Schwindel homered for the second straight game, Ian Happ added a towering homer into the third deck, and Chicago beat Minnesota.

Manuel Rodríguez (3-2) earned the win for Chicago, working two scoreless innings in relief of starter Zach Davies. Rowan Wick earned his first save of the season.

John Gant (4-9) pitched five innings and allowed two runs on three hits in his third start for the Twins since coming over from the St. Louis Cardinals for J.A. Happ at the trade deadline.

Mariners 4, Astros 0

In Seattle, Abraham Toro hit a grand slam against a player he was traded for last month, connecting in the eighth inning and sending Seattle over Houston.

Toro's homer came off former Mariners reliever Kendall Gravemen—they were part of a four-player swap on July 27.

Graveman (5-1) allowed two hits, a walk and four earned runs.

Yusei Kikuchi pitched seven sharp innings for Seattle, allowing four hits and striking out four. Paul Sewald (9-3) gave up a double to Jose Altuve in the eighth, but struck out three to get the win.

Djokovic tops teen 'Ruuune!' at US Open in calendar Slam bid

NEW YORK (AP)—If the last-name chorus of "Ruuuuune!" in support of his relatively unknown teenage opponent at the U.S. Open bothered Novak Djokovic, he never let anyone know.

Nor was there any visible evidence that Djokovic was shaken by the shaky patches he went through while dropping a set Tuesday night as he began his historic bid to complete the first calendar-year Grand Slam in men's tennis since 1969 and collect a record-breaking 21st major singles championship.

Djokovic was not perfect — "It wasn't the best of my performances," he acknowledged — but he didn't need to be. All he needed to do was win, and he did, just as he's done every time he's played a Grand Slam match this season, whether on the hard courts of the Australian Open, the red clay of the French Open, the grass of Wimbledon or, now, the first of what he hopes will be seven times on the hard courts of Flushing Meadows.

AP

Holger Vitus Nodskov Rune of Denmark, left, and Novak Djokovic, of Serbia, meet at the net after Djokovic won their first-round match at the US Open tennis championships, Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021, in New York.

Quickly regaining control after a second-set blip, then wearing down his cramping foe, Djokovic beat Danish qualifier Holger Vitus Nodskov Rune 6-1, 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-1 to reach the second round.

"I mean, obviously you always wish to have crowd behind you, but it's not always possible. That's all I can say. I mean, I don't know; I've been focusing on myself and what I need to do," said Djokovic, who next faces Tallon Griekspoor, a 25-year-old from Netherlands ranked 121st who got into the field when Roger Federer pulled out. "I guess I have to just see how it feels on the court and try to keep it together. That's all I can do."

So many differences between the two players in Arthur Ashe Stadium on a muggy Tuesday evening.

Djokovic is 34; Rune 18. Djokovic is ranked No. 1; Rune 145th. Djokovic owns 20 Grand Slam titles, the men's mark he currently shares with rivals Federer and Rafael Nadal; Rune, the junior champion at Roland Garros two years ago, had never played a match in the main draw of a major tournament until Tuesday. Djokovic's on-court career earnings entering this week were more than $150 million; Rune's were less than $150,000.

Rune showed up with some belongings in a blue Ikea shopping tote — "It's a nice bag," he explained — and wearing a backward-turned yellow hat, which he exchanged for a blue one after the first set. His descriptions of this match sounded as if they arrived from someone very much his age: All in all, he found it to be a "crazy experience" and "a dream come true," and the crowd support was "unbelievable" and a "pretty sick feeling."

Rune did come in on a 13-match winning streak, built on the lower-level ATP Challenger Tour and the qualifying rounds in New York. The fans — back at the U.S. Open after all spectators were banned last year because of the coronavirus pandemic — gave him some serious backing, responding to his pumped fists and uppercuts and pleas for more noise when he was playing at his best level in the second set.

What initially sounded like booing to both players was actually "Runeing," and the kid clearly loved the moment. So did his mother, clapping and smiling in his guest box, which also included Patrick Mouratoglou, Serena Williams' coach. Rune has trained at Mouratoglou's tennis academy in France.

Williams came so close to going 4 for 4 at the majors in 2015, before losing in the semifinals at the U.S. Open against Roberta Vinci in one of the biggest upsets in tennis history. Had Djokovic lost this, it would have been even more of a stunner.

Afterward, 2019 U.S. Open champion Bianca Andreescu closed out the first round by edging Viktorija Golubic 7-5, 4-6, 7-5 in a match that ended at 12:45 a.m. on Wednesday.

Andreescu needed a visit from a trainer in the second set because of stomach issues, but she improved to 8-0 at a tournament she won on her debut two years ago, then missed last year because of injury.

"My food was just, like, rumbling in my stomach, and I just felt like I had to throw up," said Andreescu, a 21-year-old from Canada who is seeded No. 6. "Just super nauseous, which was super random."

Earlier on Day Two, the top-seeded woman, Ash Barty, made a successful return to the site of one of the two Grand Slam tournaments she has yet to win.

The biggest holdup for Barty during her 6-1, 7-6 (7) victory over 2010 U.S. Open runner-up Vera Zvonareva came early in the first set. There was a delay of more than five minutes because the Hawk-Eye Live electronic line-calling system went down when a TV camera wasn't working.

"Just needed to make sure all cameras were spot on, and just, I think, plug one back in," said Barty, the champion at the French Open in 2019 and Wimbledon this July but never past the fourth round at the U.S. Open, "and we were all right to go."

She missed the tournament in 2020 because of the COVID-19 outbreak, remaining home in Australia.

This year, for the first time, every match on every court these two weeks is operating without any line judges. Instead, the only human officiating is the chair umpire, while every shot is ruled in or out by a system that uses cameras to detect where balls land.

Last year, electronic calls for each match except those played at the biggest two arenas, Ashe and Louis Armstrong Stadium, where people made the rulings. It was during a fourth-round match in Ashe against Pablo Carreño Busta that Djokovic was defaulted after a game in the first set when he smacked a ball that inadvertently hit a line judge in the throat.

The capable-of-combustion Djokovic, who chucked a racket into the stands while losing to Carreño Busta in the bronze medal match at the Tokyo Olympics a month ago, kept a steady countenance Tuesday, even as a set slipped away and there was applause for his faults during the tiebreaker.

Sure, there was an eye roll here or there. Puffed cheeks. A shake of his head. But otherwise, no outward betrayal of emotion.

Cam Newton headlines list of NFL players released

By ROB MAADDI AP
PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Cam Newton followed Mac Jones along the sideline, holding his right hand up, waiting for the rookie quarterback to slap it after the No. 15 overall pick threw a touchdown in a preseason game Sunday night.

Newton may as well have been congratulating Jones for taking his job.

The New England Patriots released Newton on Tuesday hours before NFL teams reduced rosters to 53 players. Jones, the first QB selected in the first round during Bill Belichick's 22 seasons in New England, takes over after Newton was a one-year stopgap following Tom Brady's departure.

Newton, the 2015 NFL MVP, headlines the list of players now seeking a new team. He was 7-8 as a starter last season.

"He started at a much higher point than what he did last year, so definitely moving in the right direction," Belichick said of Newton on Monday.

A day later, he was moving out of Patriot Way.

Newton is not vaccinated and recently missed practice time because of COVID-19 protocols. It's unknown whether that factored into New England's decision to let him go.

Jacksonville Jaguars coach Urban Meyer said vaccination status was a consideration in their roster decisions. Hours later, the NFLPA launched an investigation following Meyer's statement.

"Everyone was considered. That was part of the production, let's start talking about this and also, 'Is he vaccinated or not?' Can I say that that was a decision-maker? It was certainly in consideration," Meyer said.

Meyer pointed to defensive end Josh Allen missing one week because of protocols. Allen, who is not vaccinated, was activated from the COVID-19 list Monday.

"Well, Josh Allen's never had (COVID)," Meyer said. "He's not played in two weeks. So he's never had COVID. I don't know if I'm allowed to say that, but he's never had COVID. So that's pretty punitive."

The Eagles released wide receiver Travis Fulgham, who had an excellent five-game stretch last season before disappearing from the offense. Veteran running back Jordan Howard also was cut by Philadelphia.

Baltimore released quarterback Trace McSorley, leaving Tyler Huntley as the backup to Lamar Jackson. Carolina cut quarterback Will Grier, a third-round pick in 2019. The Panthers are going with Sam Darnold and P.J. Walker as their quarterbacks, for now.

The Falcons kept backup quarterbacks Josh Rosen and Feleipe Franks. Rosen, a former first-round pick by Arizona, survived the cuts one week after signing with Atlanta and playing in only one preseason game.

The Browns, a legitimate title contender after so many miserable seasons, surprisingly released wide receiver KhaDarel Hodge, had a solid preseason, catching two touchdown passes in the past two games. He's also been a valuable special teamer. However, he fell behind Donovan Peoples-Jones, Rashard Higgins and rookie Anthony Schwartz on the depth chart as the No. 3 behind Jarvis Landry and Odell Beckham Jr.

Cleveland also kept defensive tackle Malik McDowell, a former second-round pick by Seattle whose career once seemed over following an ATV accident and two arrests in 2017.

The Chiefs placed offensive lineman Kyle Long, who came out of retirement only to break his tibia at the start of camp, on the physically-unable-to-perform list.

The Detroit Lions left themselves without a kicker, releasing Randy Bullock and Zane Gonzalez.

Tennessee cut wide receiver Dez Fitzpatrick, a fourth-round pick. The Titans traded up 15 spots to No. 109, swapping their fifth-round pick and seventh-rounder for the receiver, who struggled with dropped passes.

The 49ers cut several veterans, including running back Wayne Gallman, receiver Travis Benjamin, safety Ha Ha Clinton Dix, cornerback Dontae Johnson and tight ends Jordan Matthews and MyCole Pruitt.

The Raiders cut speedy receiver John Brown after signing him earlier this offseason to replace the departed Nelson Agholor. Brown had $3.24 million guaranteed on the one-year deal but fell behind Henry Ruggs III, Bryan Edwards and Zay Jones on the depth chart at outside receiver and was cut.

The Bengals released a pair of 2020 Week 1 starters: guard Michael Jordan and defensive tackle Mike Daniels.

The Vikings waived quarterbacks Jake Browning and Nate Stanley, leaving rookie Kellen Mond as the only backup to Kirk Cousins right now.

The Jets released quarterbacks James Morgan, a fourth-round pick last year, and veteran Josh Johnson. That leaves just rookie Zach Wilson and Mike White, who hasn't taken a regular-season snap, at the position.

Seattle cut defensive tackle Robert Nkemdiche, a former first-round pick who had not played in the league since 2019 and was trying to revitalize his career with the Seahawks.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	84	48	.636	_
New York	76	56	.576	8
Boston	75	59	.560	10
Toronto	69	62	.527	14½
Baltimore	41	90	.313	42½
Central Division				
Chicago	77	56	.579	_
Cleveland	65	64	.504	10
Detroit	62	71	.466	15
Kansas City	59	72	.450	17
Minnesota	58	74	.439	18½
West Division				
Houston	78	54	.591	_
Oakland	73	59	.553	5
Seattle	71	62	.534	7½
Los Angeles	66	67	.496	12½
Texas	47	85	.356	31

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	70	61	.534	_
Philadelphia	68	64	.515	2½
New York	65	67	.492	5½
Washington	55	76	.420	15
Miami	55	78	.414	16
Central Division				
Milwaukee	81	52	.609	_
Cincinnati	71	62	.534	10
St. Louis	67	63	.515	12½
Chicago	58	75	.436	23
Pittsburgh	48	84	.364	32½
West Division				
San Francisco	84	48	.636	_
Los Angeles	84	49	.632	½
San Diego	71	62	.534	13½
Colorado	60	72	.455	24
Arizona	44	90	.328	41

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NMIBF thanks sponsors, supporters of first fundraiser

The Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation successfully held its first fundraiser, thanks to the event's sponsors, participants, and volunteers.

The NMIBF held the Michelob Ultra 4-Mile Run For Taste and Pokka 4-Mile Sunset Run last Saturday with 60 runners signing up for the event, which was sponsored by Michelob Ultra, Pokka, the Marianas Visitors Authority, Northern Marianas Athletics, and Latte Built.

"We couldn't have done it without the support of our business and sports communities and our friends from the MVA. Special thank you also goes out to IT&E, Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, Run Saipan, Robin Sapong, and Saipan International School, members of our NMI National Team Program, and of course all the runners that took part in the race," NMIBF president James Lee said.

IT&E and NMIFA sponsored runners for both races, while Run Saipan also had its members joining the event. Robin Sapong was in charge of the timing and assisted NMIBF in the online registration process, while SIS through its headmaster Ron Snyder, provided the start/finish line arch at the Garapan Fishing Base. Players on the NMI National Team Program, on the other hand, manned the turnaround and water station. Michelob Ultra, Pokka, MVA, NMA, and Latte Built, meanwhile, provided prizes to the Top 3 winners in the men's and women's divisions of each race.

Sylvina Simram was among the players who volunteered for the race and thanked the runners and event sponsors for backing up NMIBF's first fundraiser for the national team program.

"We are grateful for their assistance and look forward for their support in future fundraisers as we work together on having the means to make it to Marshall Islands next year and represent the CNMI to the Micronesian Games," Simram said.

Shuji Kuroda and Lily Muldoon topped the Michelob Ultra 4-Mile Run For Taste after clocking in at 24:05 and 27:44, respectively. In the Pokka 4-Mile Sunset Run, Dev Bachani recorded 27:04 to finish first in the men's, while Tiana Cabrera ruled the women's field with a time of 30:23. ***(PR)***

From left, Latte Built representative Alberto Roberto, Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation president James Lee, Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla Iakopo, and MARPAC resident manager Guy Pudney pose for a photo during the awards ceremony for the Michelob Ultra 4-Mile Run For Taste and Pokka 4-Mile Sunset Run last Saturday at the Garapan Fishing Base. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hermogenes is 8-ball champ anew at New Bamboo Bar

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Rey Hermogenes went perfect en route to winning the New Bamboo Bar Battle of the Champions last Saturday at the New Bamboo Bar in Saipan Las Vegas Resort along Middle Road.

The 58-year-old general maintenance staff at the Kristo Rai Church only needed to win Game 1 against Jerry Soriano in the championship round to rule the competition.

The finals seemed headed to a winner-take-all Game 2 as Soriano made quick work of his solid balls and kept Hermogenes in his chair. However, disaster struck for the 50-year-old Marianas Water & Ice deliveryman when he accidentally hit the 8-ball with only two solid balls left on his rack. Hermogenes thus won without really doing anything and pocketed the $500 first-place purse.

"I was just lucky even before the finals last Saturday. I didn't drop a game in my first four matches and that's why I advanced to the finals with the twice-to-beat advantage," he said.

The ace pool player from Marilao, Bulacan in the Philippines started his perfect evening with a win over Danny Miranda. He then followed that up by beating Roel Baretto before making it three straight by vanquishing Ben Norita.

Hermogenes then got the first finals berth and the all-important twice-to-beat advantage locked up after humbling Soriano in their first encounter of the night.

Soriano, meanwhile, also started strong with a victory over Anson Smith. He then got the better of Rowell "Cobra" Mariano in the second round before making is 3-for-3 by overcoming Nolan Cultura.

After getting stopped by eventual winner Hermogenes, Soriano regrouped and triumphed over Cultura in the loser's bracket finals to get another crack at his winner's bracket conqueror. He appeared on his way to at last force a do-or-die second game until that accidental carrom on the 8-ball ultimately cost him the championship.

The Mexico, Pampanga in the Philippines native settled for the $250 second place prize, while Cultura wound up third and went home with $100.

A total of 16 pool masters took part in the New Bamboo Bar Battle, which gathers the month's weekly winners for the monthly championship. The 8-ball tournament, sponsored by New Bamboo Bar, Saipan Vegas, and Budweiser, is held every month and for more information, call Soriano at 588-1971.

Rey Hermogenes, second from left, won the New Bamboo Bar Battle of the Champions last Saturday at the New Bamboo Bar in Saipan Las Vegas Resort along Middle Road. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

KING

From Page 20

Homies advance with an 18-7 over the Comets.

Shayne Villanueva, whose Roil Soil Marketing is holding the Labor Day tournament, is pretty satisfied how the King of the Diamond tournament has unfolded so far.

"We are very happy with tournament play. Last night (Tuesday) saw the first teams eliminated. We are happy the weather is keeping its course," he said.

Villanueva also alluded to baseball players showing up for the King of the Diamond, considering baseball action on island has been dormant for the good part of the past two years already. "There are a mix of baseball players and softball players."

Aside from the actual softball games, a home run derby and a cornhole tournament will also be held. According to the internet, cornhole is a lawn game wherein players take turns throwing 16-ounce bags of corn kernels at a raised board with a hole in the far end. A bag in the hole scores 3 points, while one on the board scores 1 point. Play continues until a team or player reaches or exceeds the score of 21.

Prizes for the King of the Diamond Labor Day Softball Tournament is $1,000 plus a set of 12 uniforms for first place, $750 for second place, $500 for third place, and $350 for fourth place. It is sponsored by Budweiser, AllStar Sporting Goods, Power 99, and *Marianas Variety*. For more information, call Ikluk Masayos at 287-7979 or Villanueva at 285-4269.

TRENCH

From Page 20

proud and very satisfied of their sons' progression and training from Trench Tech.

"For us parents its always important who is training them. We trust professor Cuki and the BJJ training he is conducting. They learn so much on discipline and understanding of the martial art," he said.

He added that what Trench Tech teaches is self-defense for real-life situations not only to stand up to bullies but also to protect others.

Trench Tech offers BJJ kids classes ages 5-12 every Tuesday and Thursday from 5:35pm to 6:20pm and adult BJJ classes every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 6:30pm to 8pm. It also offers Kids MMA every Saturday from 9:30am to 10:30am Call 670-783-4MMA for more details on how to enroll today.

PLAYERS

From Page 20

"Most of the players on island are indoor players. So I wanted to put on something that people of the island are familiar with. It's also partially to help the youngsters of the island to improve their game. A lot of them have potential. It's just they don't have the opportunity to play," said Pang.

He added that the tournament was called Back-to-School Co-ed Volleyball Tournament because he wanted to invite players who are gearing up for their respective interscholastic leagues to use the competition as a warm-up.

"The theme is back to school because most of the schools are probably back one to two weeks. So, we're using this theme because we're trying to come back to the new normal and trying to get back to things we're familiar with and by playing the game that everybody loves and that's why they're here."

Ultimately, Pang said the Back-to-School Co-ed Volleyball Tournament served its purpose as the island's top volleyball players came out in droves and it showed that the sport is truly back.

"By and large with the turnout. I actually hoping that there would be one or two more teams, but we work with what we have. This was the first time we raised the price of the entry fee a little but most people here are still happy to pay that price. I think this is a good turnout and the championship game was definitely a good one and I feel that the people most ready to play came out and showed what they got," he said.

A total of eight teams took part in the tournament the three-day tourney, namely Skr Skr, New Kids on the Block, Ashes, Agape's Yang Gang, Nothing But Net, The Big Ducks 2.0., eventual runner-up Old School, and eventual champion Team Fresh Approach.

The latter avenged its loss to Old School in the elimination round by winning when it mattered the most, 25-15, 25-22. The winning team was bannered by captain Bryan Chlarson, Steven Balakrishna, Jerome Manzon, Nilo Calimag, John Matias, Jerry Saures, Jasper Perez, Iszel Estevez, Kat Saures, and Alysa Baquilles.

Old School was made up of captain Mei Rengiil, towering Ko Kumuch, Yohei Iwashita, Nak Nakashima, Ryan Camacho, Typhoon Saito, Mike Omar, Ana Ina, and Nakashima Atalig.

Players from both teams received medals for finishing as the Top 2 teams of the Back-to-School Co-ed Volleyball Tournament.

Rays win 9th straight, Bogaerts tests positive for virus PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

NMIBF thanks sponsors, supporters of first fundraiser PAGE 19

Trench Tech promotes 2 brothers to higher belts

By MARK RABAGO
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Trench Tech Gym promoted brothers Stanley Iakopo Jr. and Conan Briggeman to gray/white belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu during simple rites at the Mihaville gym last Tuesday night.

BJJ black belt Cuki Alvarez congratulated 10-year-old Iakopo and 8-year-old Briggeman for attaining the gray/white belt rank and said they achieved the feat because of their hard work and dedication to the martial art.

"Grey white is the next rank for children under 15. They accomplished this feat with three years of consistent training in BJJ and improved substantially in their skillset in our children's program. After gray/white is gray/black, yellow, orange, and then green. Green belt is the highest rank for kids and teenagers under 16," he said.

Iakopo said it was "great and an honor" to have been promoted to gray/white belt. He said his ultimate goal is to achieve the rank of black belt in BJJ.

Briggeman, for his part, said he's happy to have reached the rank of gray/white belt after he and his brother started training at Trench Tech.

He said like his older brother, he also wants to attain the rank of black-belt in BJJ.

Both brothers admitted to being inspired by their father, CNMI Office of Veterans Affairs executive officer Stanley Iakopo Sr., in pursuing the mixed martial art of BJJ. Both train at Alvarez's facility three times a week.

Iakopo Sr. said he and his wife, Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla Iakopo, are very

See TRENCH on Page 19

Brothers Stanley Iakopo Jr., left, and Conan Briggeman, right, pose with Trench Tech Gym Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt Cuki Alvarez after their simple promotion ceremony at the Mihaville gym last Tuesday night.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Old School's Ko Kumuch meets Team Fresh Approach's Steven Balakrishna in the net during the finals of the Agape Christian School's Back-to-School Co-ed Volleyball Tournament last Saturday at the Agape Gymnasium along Middle Road.
MARK RABAGO

'Players most ready to play came out'

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

While it came a couple of teams short of its expected turnout, Agape Christian School's Back-to-School Co-ed Volleyball Tournament was still a success, according to coordinator En Yang Pang.

He said it's been a while since the local community had an indoor tournament especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, so in a way the BTS volleyball tournament was welcomed by the island's volleyball community that have been waiting for months to see some action on the court.

See PLAYERS on Page 19

King of the Diamond gets going

By MARK RABAGO
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The King of the Diamond Labor Day Softball Tournament got going last Sunday with 10 games on tap at the Capitol Hill Ballfield.

One of the highlights of Day 1 of the return of the boys of Summer was the game between Homies and Kliq with the latter prevailing in a score of 11-9.

Other results last Sunday saw Mwekmwekid over Olek Prim, 24-13; Asahi over Saipal, 10-3; Sufa over Titang, 7-1; Angels over Asahi, 24-8; Pues OK 4Nate over Peneinei, 21-19; Cornboys over TMac, 10-0; and Boys Klal over Toka Hao, 15-9.

The tourney continued Monday with Asahi getting the better of Olek Prim, 26-11; Mwekmwekid beating Saipal, 9-8; and Toka Hao walloping TMac, 19-2. Tuesday's scores then saw Asahi win over Peneinei, 16-12; Titang overcome Mwekmwekid, 18-11; and

See KING on Page 19

Homies and Kliq faced each other in Day 1 of the King of the Diamond Labor Day Softball Tournament last Sudnay at the Capitol Hill Ballfield.
MARK RABAGO